



European  
University  
Institute

DEPARTMENT  
OF HISTORY  
AND  
CIVILIZATION

A MUGHAL *MUNŠĪ* AT WORK.

CONFLICTS AND EMOTIONS IN MUSTA‘IDD  
ḤĀN’S *MA’ĀŠIR-I ‘ĀLAMGĪRĪ*. A  
NARRATOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

Tilman Kulke

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to  
obtaining the degree of Doctor of History and Civilization  
of the European University Institute

Florence, 17 May 2016



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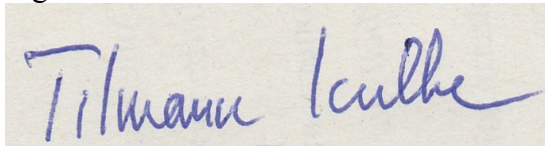
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# THESIS ABSTRACT

Aurangzīb has generally been described as a Mughal villain, who, through his intolerant religious policy and temple destructions, ushered in the empire's later downfall. This negative image also stains Musta'idd Hān (died 1724) and his chronicle, the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* (written between 1707-1710), which covers the whole reign of the once mighty emperor.

However, many important aspects have been overlooked in this classic narrative. First, Musta'idd Hān, as a *munšī*, was a long-term member of the cosmopolitan Indo-Persian intelligentsia. In order to write this important chronicle, he had to collaborate with the text's patron 'Ināyat Allāh Hān (died 1726), a blind admirer of Aurangzīb's most controversial decisions. As will be shown, these two opposing characters are an important reason for the dichotomies in the text.

Equally, as Musta'idd Hān wrote the chronicle, the empire was thrown into one of its worst crises in decades: it thus was obvious that Aurangzīb had made mistakes during his reign. Aurangzīb's successor Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur (gov. 1707-1712), the text's main recipient, distinguished himself from his father in many points, and he now had to pay for Aurangzīb's errors. Our author had to react to all of these issues.

It will be shown that the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* is a very complex narrative and much more multifarious than previously thought. It is not only a chronicle about the past and a glorification of an emperor who destroyed temples; rather, I argue, it is also a future-oriented text that called for new forms of government. It should therefore be described as an *agenda 1710* for the new Šāh. Through a detailed narratological analysis of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, we come to understand how the author wrote history in a time of crisis and how he understood the notion of a just Muslim government in the years following Aurangzīb's death.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To begin with, I would like to thank two people without whom this work would never have been started and completed. First of all, I owe thanks to Jorge Flores, who helped me to start a four-year scholarship at the European University Institute in Florence. From the very beginning of my work, he has consistently encouraged me to broaden my view beyond the confines of Islamic studies and to utilise approaches from early modern global history and comparative literary studies. Without the numerous discussions, his unabated understanding, especially during the difficult early months spent flitting between Florence and Tbilisi, and his many references and invitations to conferences, all of which gave new perspectives on my work, the present study would not have been possible.

Second, I must note that without Stephan Conermann, I would never have sent my application to Florence. Ever since the beginning of my studies in Bonn, he has been the epitome of studious enthusiasm and scientific freedom. In recent years, both men have been much more than just academic supervisors. During all the ups and downs in this phase of my life, I never sensed any negative pressure from them; instead, I always felt understood. After each meeting in Florence and Bonn, I left feeling confident and motivated. I owe thanks to both of them for the fact that my work took a much broader view, with its focus on the socio-structural environment of the *munṣī* Musta‘idd Ḥān and the use of targeted narratological analysis.

My co-supervisor Luca Molà welcomed my ideas from the beginning. I would like to thank him sincerely for his continuing advice and constant motivation. Equally, when I learned that Jos Gommans might be one of my external supervisors, I could only happily agree. His questions on my work during the workshop on *Europe and Islamate Eurasia - Early Modern Perspectives*, organised by Jorge Flores in November last year at the EUI, and the discussions throughout that evening motivated me to stay true to my course. I hope I have been able to show that all of these talks made a deep impression on my work.

Very shortly before handing in my thesis, just one day before New Year's, my dear friend 'beyond the Channel', James White, continually helped me to finish the final corrections to my work. Undoubtedly, this New Year will be a new beginning for both of us. Without your help, I would never have been able to meet this deadline. In this sense: Друзья познаются в беде!

Finally, this work would not have been possible without the life-long support of my family. Roli, Hami, and Tetti, you will realise your influence on this work as you read through the last few pages.

I dedicate this study to two powerful women: my mother Ursula (*'Uschi'*) and her mother, Emmi *'Ringelrose'* Sievers. Unfortunately, neither could witness the completion of this work. It is perhaps no coincidence that this work is mainly about an early eighteenth-century Muslim chronicler who endeavoured to explain the setbacks of his protagonist and give them all meaning, since this is very much what I have been trying to do while working on my thesis. Therefore, all my thanks go to Lelle, Sopi, and Tini, without whom I would never have found any meaning to explain. Their daily laughter and the impetus they provided to finish the final stages of this work and move onto the next phase of my life have been at the basis of this thesis

# PRELUDE

*Seule la littérature peut vous permettre d'entrer en contact avec l'esprit d'un mort, de manière plus directe, plus complète et plus profonde que ne le ferait même la conversation avec un ami - aussi profonde, aussi durable que soit une amitié, jamais on ne se livre, dans une conversation, aussi complètement qu'on ne le fait devant une feuille vide, s'adressant à un destinataire inconnu. - Michel Houellebecq.<sup>1</sup>*

The *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* is a book full of tales. It is about humans who live, hope, and feel, who struggle and fight, and who tackle hard tasks. We meet characters who cannot stand their fates: peasants, warriors, holy men, sinners, and infidels, all of whom experience their gods and destinies differently. It is also about the life and times of one of the most fascinating emperors of the early modern era: Muḥammad Aurangzīb 'Ālamgīr, who reigned as Mughal emperor over India for nearly 50 years, from 1658 to 1707. Both past and present readers of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* become involved with the people they meet as they read: they are drawn into the tale, they envision the story, and they feel sorry, happy, or angry for the character's fate. Through these tales, beliefs are conveyed and values are marked. Some of them comfort, some warn, and others simply push forward the thoughts of the text's ultimate recipient. How this happens and how we are able to describe it from an historical point of view is the topic of my work. In other words, I am conducting a narratological investigation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Michel Houellebecq, *Soumission*, Paris, 2014, 13.

<sup>2</sup> For this prelude, I refer to Sönke Finnern's introduction, see idem, *Narratologie und biblische Exegese. Eine integrative Methode der Erzählanalyse und ihr Ertrag am Beispiel von Matthäus 28*, Tübingen 2010, 1. Without his ongoing support in terms of methodological approach, the present study would not have been possible.



# INTRODUCTION

*Il faut être absolument modern* - Rimbaud, 1873.<sup>3</sup>

*Thank God (...) owing to the piety of the Emperor, the whole of Hindustan is free from the filth of innovation (...)* - Musta‘idd Ḥān praises Aurangzīb ‘Alamgīr’s rule in Sir Jadunath Sarkar’s 1947 translation.<sup>4</sup>

At the beginning of 1707, Aurangzīb ‘Alamgīr, one of the most powerful and controversial rulers of the early modern period, died at the age of 89 in the Deccan, far away from the imperial centres of Delhi and Agra. During his nearly 50 years of reign (1658-1707), the Mughal Empire (1526-1858) experienced its largest expansion. In 1700, it was one of the world’s leading economies and was the undisputed superpower of India after the conquest of the once impregnable fortress of Golconda in 1687. However, the first signs of a structural crisis were already appearing:<sup>5</sup>

India in 1700 presented a deceptive picture: Superficially, the Mughal kingdom was enormous, wealthy, powerful and stable (...) The wealth of the empire’s cities, the prized qualities of its manufactures goods, attracted a vigorous international trade, and the seeming capacity of Indian agriculture to sustain the land revenue upon which government operations and massive armies were based - all of these appeared set to continue. Little wonder then that many in the seventeenth century and since called it “a New Age”.<sup>6</sup>

Yet, this ‘New Age’ was never achieved; in fact, it immediately became clear that Aurangzīb’s son and successor Šāh ‘Alam Bahādur (ruled 1707-1712), who did not come to

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<sup>3</sup> Helmuth Kiesel, *Geschichte der literarischen Moderne. Sprache, Ästhetik, Dichtung im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert*, Munich, 2004, 15.

<sup>4</sup> Jadunath Sarkar (trans.), *Maāsir-i- ‘Ālamgiri. A History of the Emperor Aurangzīb-‘Ālamgīr (reigned 1658-1707 A.D.) of Sāqī Must‘ad Ḥān*, Calcutta, 1947, 14.

<sup>5</sup> Munis Faruqi, ‘Awrangzīb’, in Kate Fleet/et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Third Edition*, Brill Online, 2014, last accessed 4/12/2014 ([http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/awrangzib-COM\\_23859](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/awrangzib-COM_23859)); Simon Digby, *Sufis and Soldiers in Awrangzeb’s Deccan. Malfūzāt-i Naqshbandiyya*, New Delhi, 2001; Richard Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204-1760*, New Delhi, 1993; Muḥammad Husain, *Structure of Politics under Aurangzeb 1658-1707*, New Delhi, 2002. Further important studies will be discussed below.

<sup>6</sup> Burton Stein, *A History of India*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. David Arnold, Chichester, 2010, 182.

power until the age of 64, had to face numerous and almost insurmountable problems, fighting on several fronts with dangerous rebellions.<sup>7</sup>

However, it was not only the new ruler who encountered complex tasks in 1707. Soon after Aurangzīb passed away, 'Ināyat Allāh Ḥān b. Mīrzā Šukr (died 1726), his former first secretary and one of his closest advisors, urged Musta'idd Ḥān (died 1724) to write a chronicle of Aurangzīb's reign. It was only after much deliberating and hesitation that Musta'idd Ḥān finally accepted the job, since he knew that such a new task, regardless of its prestige, would be a very complicated and delicate one. He would have to portray the once mighty ruler in a positive and glorifying way to a son and successor who was now struggling with the consequences of his father's policy of expansion and occasionally unpopular decisions. In 1710, after three years of intensive work, the first and only chronicle reporting the entire reign of Aurangzīb, the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* (*Heroic Deeds of [Aurangzīb] 'Ālamgīr*), was finally completed.

It would be very easy to stamp this text as proof of an ultra-orthodox Muslim reign which included enduring and violent crackdowns against the 'infidels', especially Hindus. As we shall soon see, this view has been repeatedly taken in works that range from popular treatises to reputable scientific studies. In my opinion, the reason for this might be that it is very tempting to individually quote those parts of the text that clearly speak for themselves (such as a destruction of the temple) and then draw the conclusion that this outstandingly intolerant exercise of power was diametrically opposed to Aurangzīb's tolerant predecessors. This reign thus seems crucial for explaining the subsequent downfall of the Mughal Empire.

But I disagree. In fact, the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* is a product of an evolving intellectual and political Muslim discourse in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Mughal India. It is not a monotonous source that only served to stylise Aurangzīb's rule by enumerating his exploits in a repetitious way. Rather, as will be shown, the text is much more diverse, as its author Musta'idd Ḥān perceived himself not only as the new emperor's subject and an uncritical amanuensis of Aurangzīb's official chronicle, but also as a self-confident *munšī*. In this sense, he tried hard to present his own individual perception of the history of this very controversial ruler: he did so without any fear of criticising the latter's decisions and, often in a secretive way, suggested alternatives to his successor.

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<sup>7</sup> For the latest discussion on Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur's government see Munis D. Faruqi, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire 1504-1719*, Cambridge, 2012, 309-325.



In fact, he presented the text to his successor as an *agenda 1710*,<sup>8</sup> while also leaving his individual stamp as a confident author on this highly relevant chronicle.

As will be shown, Musta‘idd Ḥān, too, had to use a specific technique to explain the break in his protagonist’s narrative. However, the question is: which narrative technique did he use? Bearing this in mind, what does Musta‘idd Ḥān interpret as the main focal point of Aurangzīb’s reign? Do we find here a history of suffering? What about the fears of Aurangzīb, Musta‘idd Ḥān, and other characters within the text?<sup>9</sup> If we read Musta‘idd Ḥān’s work very closely, might we find some sort of fear in respect to a possible decline of Mughal power after Aurangzīb’s death? As the dead emperor was not the intended recipient of Musta‘idd Ḥān’s chronicle, do we also find some criticism of Aurangzīb? If so, what kind of criticism is it? Was it really the author’s intention to present Aurangzīb as a strong, conservative Sunnī Muslim, whose only aim was to fight the *kuffār* (infidels) and never show any clemency? Again, this is what Aurangzīb is basically known for: he is regarded as the last strong Mughal emperor, who became more and more pious and started, absolutely logically, destroying several non-Islamic places. However, was it really the author’s intention to present Aurangzīb in this way to Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur? And how does Musta‘idd Ḥān describe conflicts with the *kuffār*? Mainly as a religious conflict or do we also find rational reasons for the king’s wars and some sort of Mughal *Realpolitik*?

The present study seeks to contribute to the ongoing research on Mughal historiography by analysing the narrative structure of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* in detail. In this introduction, I will discuss the impact of our chronicle on this field of study and, vice versa, how research has classified and analysed Musta‘idd Ḥān’s text up to this point. This discussion will be followed by a short presentation of the structure of my thesis.

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<sup>8</sup> In many ways, I would have profited from an earlier reading of the innovative and interesting studies of Ali Anooshahr, which Jos Gommans suggested in his report of my thesis. Unfortunately, I could not include them into my final version. Definitely a serious omission. Anooshahr, too, analyses Indo-Persian, respectively Ottoman chronicles in regard of their pragmatic nature and their generally neglected political and cultural implications. See, e.g., idem, *The Ghazi Sultans and The Frontiers of Islam. A Comparative Study of the Late Medieval and Early Modern Periods*, London, 2009, 8; this title is not listed in the bibliography, which I have not changed in regard of its content between the period of handing in my thesis on 31/12/15 and sending my final version for the defence on 17/5/2016.

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. William Reedy, *The Navigation of Feeling. A Framework for the History of Emotions*, New York, 2001.

## SOME INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON MUGHAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

It was not so long ago when Indian history was characterised primarily as being Hindu-Buddhist.<sup>10</sup> This only changed in the last third of the twentieth century; since then, it has been widely accepted that Indian historiography reached its peak during the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526) and Mughal rule (1526-1858). Under these new rulers, who originated from the Ferghana Valley, more than 40 Indo-Persian chronicles were created, primarily dealing with the history of a dynasty, a specific ruler, or with world-historical issues:

In India (...), a series of royal *namas* or books were written to celebrate the reigns of successive Mughals from the founder, Babur, through to Akbar the Great (under whose court historian, Abū'l Fazl, the genre matured) to the ill-fated Shah Jahan, builder of the Taj Mahal and an inveterate micro-manager of his court historians<sup>11</sup> (...) The Mughal period, especially from the sixteenth to mid-eighteenth centuries, is not unreasonably held to be the most glorious and prolific epoch of Indo-Persian historiography.<sup>12</sup>

Important historiographical works were created under the first two Mughal rulers, Bābur (died 1530) and Humāyūn (died 1556). Babur left us with one of the most impressive early modern autobiographies, *Bābur-nāma*.<sup>13</sup> Jauhar Āftābchī employed a stylistically impressive narrative strategy in his *Tazkirat al-Waqi'āt*, which skilfully blended the humiliations (*Kontingenzerfahrungen*)<sup>14</sup> that the new ruler Humāyūn endured into a vehicle for a meaningful narrative.<sup>15</sup> Bābur's daughter, Gulbadan Bīgum (died 1603), also presented us with one of the most impressive textual sources by a woman in the early modern period in her

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<sup>10</sup> The latest discussion on that topic gives Rajeev Kinra, *Writing Self. Writing Empire. Āandar-bhān Brahman and the Cultural World of the Indo-Persian State Secretary*, Berkeley, 2015, 1-16, 286-297; see also Asim Roy, 'Indo-Persian Historical Thoughts and Writings: India 1350-1750' in José Rabasa, Masayuki Sato, and Edoardo Tortarolo (eds.), *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, Oxford, 2012, 148-172; Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World. Studies on Culture and Politics*, New Delhi, 2011; Kumkum Chatterjee, *The Cultures of History in Early Modern India. Persianization and Mughal Culture in Bengal*, Oxford, 2009; see the detailed discussions on both of these studies in Stephan Conermann, *Die Mogulzeit in Indien. Einführung*, in *sehepunkte* 13 (2013), Nr. 7/8 [15.07.2013], URL: <http://www.sehepunkte.de/2013/07/forum/die-mogulzeit-in-indien-171/>; also idem, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung. Indo-Persische Geschichtsschreibung während der Mogulzeit (932-1118/1516-1707)*, Wiesbaden, 2002; as well as Velcheru Narayana Rao, David Shulman, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Textures of Time. Writing History in South India 1600-1800*, New York, 2003; Hermann Kulke, *Geschichte Indiens. Von der Induskultur bis heute*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Munich, 2010.

<sup>11</sup> José Rabasa, Masayuki Sato, and Edoardo Tortarolo, 'Editor's Introduction' in José Rabasa/Masayuki Sato/Edoardo Tortarolo (eds.), *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, Oxford, 2012, 1-24.

<sup>12</sup> Asim Roy, 'Indo-Persian Historical Thoughts and Writings', 158.

<sup>13</sup> Stephen Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises, Bābur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia, Afghanistan and India (1483-1530)*, Leiden, 2004.

<sup>14</sup> On the term's definition see in detail: Conermann, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*.

<sup>15</sup> Nader Purnaqqheband, *Strategien der Kontingenzbewältigung. Der Mogulherrscher Humāyūn (r.1530-1540 und 1555-1556) dargestellt in der „Tazkirat al-Wāqī'āt“ seines Leibdieners Jauhar Āftābchī*, Schenefeld, 2007.

*Humāyūn-nāma*, which was completed on behalf of her nephew Ġalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Akbar (governed 1556-1605).<sup>16</sup>

Under Akbar, Indo-Persian historiography experienced a significant boost;<sup>17</sup> in his reign alone, more than a dozen chronicles were written, primarily serving the imperial idea and Akbar's legitimisation of his dynasty's rule. During this period, Abū l-Faẓl (died 1602) became Akbar's new 'chief-ideologist'.<sup>18</sup> After years of work, he presented his 1000-page chronicle, the *Akbar-nāma*,<sup>19</sup> to his ruler and patron, and it became a masterpiece of Mughal and world literature:<sup>20</sup> '(...) Abū'l Faẓl's Akbarnama (...) marks the next notable advance in Mughal Indian historiography.'<sup>21</sup> However, Akbar and Abū l-Faẓl were also heavily criticised in the chronicle, demonstrating the first signs of a broad and critical Mughal public sphere which bloomed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: we will analyse it in more detail below.<sup>22</sup>

From the nineteenth century onwards, an intensive translation of many of these Indo-Persian sources began: this was particularly stimulated by the new British rulers.<sup>23</sup> As early as 1829, John Briggs translated Firišta's *Gulšān-i Ibrāhīmī* (1612), one of the most important sources for the Indian Middle Ages;<sup>24</sup> 30 years later, Henry Elliot finished his significant eight-volume *India as told by its own historians*.<sup>25</sup> From the beginning of the twentieth century, one could rely on a significant number of sources translated from Persian. Soon, numerous historical studies were written on 'Muslim India', its rulers, and their most important chroniclers.

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<sup>16</sup> Annete Beveridge (trans.), *The History of Humāyūn (Humāyūn-nama) by Gul-Badan Begum*, London, 1902.

<sup>17</sup> In detail André Wink, *Akbar*, Oxford, 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Conermann, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*, 131.

<sup>19</sup> Henry Beveridge (trans.), *The Akbarnama of Abū'l-Faẓl*, vol. 1-3, New Delhi, 1977 (2 repr.).

<sup>20</sup> Kunwar Mohammed Ashraf, *Indian Historiography and Other Related Papers*, ed. and trans., Jaweed Ashraf, New Delhi, 2006.

<sup>21</sup> Bharati Ray (ed.), *Different Types of History*, New Delhi, 2009, 64.

<sup>22</sup> Regarding the criticism against Akbar's new course, see 'Abd al-Qādir Badā'ūnī, *Muntaḥab at-tavārīḥ*, ed. Kabīr ad-Dīn Aḥmad 'Alī and W. N. Lees. 3 vols., Calcutta, 1865-1869. For the three volumes in translation see <http://persian.packhum.org/persian>, last accessed 4/10/2014; see also Margrit Pernau, 'Gab es eine indische Zivilgesellschaft im 19. Jahrhundert? Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Globalgeschichte und historischer Semantik' in *Traverse*, vol. 3, 2007, 51-66.

<sup>23</sup> Siehe Rama Sundari Mantena, *The Origins of Modern Historiography in India. Antiquarianism and Philology, 1780-1880*, New York, 2012, also Peter Gottschalk, *Religion, Science and Empire. Classifying Hinduism and Islam in British India*, Oxford, 2013.

<sup>24</sup> See also Alam, *Writing the Mughal World*, Introduction, 1-33.

<sup>25</sup> John Briggs, *History of the Rise of the Mohamedan Power in India till the Year A.D. 1612, Translated from the original Persian of Mohamed Kasim Ferishta*, 4 vols., London, 1829, repr. Calcutta, 1908-1910; Henry Elliot and John Dowson (eds.), *The History of India, as Told by its Own Historians*, vol. 7., repr. 1867, Cambridge 2013, 115-116; see the critique of Muhammed Habib on the aforementioned authors in idem, *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period. Collected Papers of Professor Muḥammad Habib*, 2 vols., ed. Khalid Ahmad Nizami, New Delhi, 1974-1981; Elliot and Dawson's study is available online, see <http://www.archive.org/stream/cu31924073036778#page/n5/mode/2up> [last accessed 12 September 2013].

However, these studies largely lacked specific normative methodologies. Whether there might have been a deeper narrative strategy pursued during the writing process, at which recipients the texts were aimed, and whether there was perhaps a hidden political agenda concealed behind the text were issues that were hardly investigated: if they were discussed, the analysis was distinctly one-dimensional.<sup>26</sup>

Long before the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Muslim chronicles served scholars primarily to reconstruct a naked skeleton of historical events and political facts, trying to narrate the past how it really was. And, by doing so, modern historians ranted frequently and extensively against the, in their opinion, sloppy work of their pre-modern Muslim predecessors, who, so the accusation goes, simply copied from the works of older historians or were just compiling already known material in a new order, apparently because of a lack of talent or out of insufficient scientific awareness. Pre-modern Muslim chronicles were therefore only assessed on whether they mentioned new, hitherto unknown events or whether their report covered with previously reliable ones.<sup>27</sup>

A major reason for this lack of a methodological approach is surely the fact that the historiography was simply not ready. Moreover, the descriptive style of Indo-Persian chroniclers and their often surprisingly modern and rational argumentation tempted later historians into an often uncritical acceptance of passages from the text. For example, the two-volume *Cambridge History of India*, published between 1928 and 1937, was little more than a reworking of its Indo-Persian predecessors.<sup>28</sup>

It is here where Harbans Mukhia sees the major difference between Western European historiographical manuscripts, which were primarily produced by the monastic clergy, and Indo-Persian historiography.<sup>29</sup> The latter had its roots in the long tradition of pre-Islamic ancient Persian epic verse, which was predominately interested in the history of kings and dynasties. This type of writing continued to be disseminated until the beginning of the eleventh century and came to a glorious end in Fardūsī's (died 1020) magnum opus, the *Šāh-*

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<sup>26</sup> See for example Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzīb*, 5 vols., Calcutta, 1912-1924.

<sup>27</sup> See Stephan Conermann, 'Review: Kurt Franz, *Kompilation in arabischen Chroniken. Die Überlieferung vom Aufstand der Zang zwischen Geschichtlichkeit und Intertextualität vom 9. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert*. Berlin 2004' in *H-Soz-u-Kult*, <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/2006-2-233>, last accessed 15/6/2011. I have translated this section. See also Ali Anooshahr's similar comment on Ja'far Beg Qazvīnī's writings, which '(...) most analyses of this outstanding example of dialogical historiography have downplayed its value because of its paucity of new information (...)', see Anooshahr's abstract on 'Dialogue and Territoriality in a Mughal History of the Millennium' in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 55, no. 2-3, 2012, 220-254. This title is not listed in the bibliography, which I have not changed in regard of its content between the period of handing in my thesis on 31/12/15 and sending my final version for the defence on 17/5/2016.

<sup>28</sup> Wolseley Haig, *The Cambridge History of India*, vol. 3, *Turks and Afghans*, Cambridge, 1928, vol. 4, Richard Burn, *The Mughul Period*, Cambridge, 1937.

<sup>29</sup> Harbans Mukhia, *Historians and Historiography during the reign of Akbar*, New Delhi, 1976.

*nāma*.<sup>30</sup> Mukhia claims that since Indo-Persian historians primarily relied on this form of non-clerical historiography, it can almost be described as pre-modern political history.

To the new British rulers, this uncritical acceptance of the Muslim and Hindu sources was very convenient, as they delivered the ideal legitimization of rule in India. On the one hand, it was argued that the Hindu-Buddhist texts demonstrated a culturally intrinsic ahistorical form of thinking, which textually confirmed alleged government incompetence and detached awareness of these cultures. On the other hand, it was believed that Indo-Persian texts primarily bore witness to Muslim fundamentalism and the lasting desire for permanent war against the infidels. The British had plenty to do: maintain a military presence against the wild Muslims on the one hand and protecting and civilising the ‘passive Hindu’ on the other, all of which was justified by the banner of a long-lost ancient civilisation that had missed the leap into modernity. Furthermore, this constructed image of Hindu-hating Muslim tyrants and the passive and vulnerable Hindus underpinned the portrayal of India’s ‘unhappy system of oppression’ as a counterpart to liberal England.<sup>31</sup>

The British version of Indian history was quickly adopted in the school and education system and thus influenced the future elites of the country and its intelligentsia, which solidified over the years. In a similar manner, the majority of Indian educational reformers accepted the supposed backwardness of their own culture that had been firmly established by the British-dominated historiography.<sup>32</sup> On the Muslim side, at least since the end of the *Khilafat* Movement (founded in 1918 by pan-Islamists in India who stood for the Ottoman caliphate and regarded themselves as a reaction to British colonial rule), a collective narrative of victimhood emerged, calling for a new ‘homeland’ for the deposed Muslim minority. No less than this, politically active Hindu scholars used this simplified interpretation of India’s history to consistently demonstrate the risk of the Muslim presence in India.<sup>33</sup> At this point, Sir Jadunath Sarkar (1870-1958) comes into play, not only because of his translation of our text, the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, but also because of his impressive *oeuvre* on Mughal history in general. His work and influence on Mughal historiography from the beginning of the

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<sup>30</sup> Asim Roy, *Indo-Persian Historical Thoughts and Writings*, 153.

<sup>31</sup> Harald Fischer-Tiné and Michael Mann (eds.), *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission. Cultural Ideology in British India*, London, 2004, 5 ff.

<sup>32</sup> Michael Mann, ‘Vom Nutzen der Geschichte. Historische Repräsentationen der indischen Nationen um die Wende zum 20. Jahrhundert’, in *Periplus*, vol. 18, 2008, 68-94, 86.

<sup>33</sup> Idem, *Sinnvolle Geschichte. Historische Repräsentationen im neuzeitlichen Südasien*, Heidelberg, 2009, 139 f.; see also Michael Gottlob, ‘Review: Michael, Mann, Sinnvolle Geschichte. Historische Repräsentationen im neuzeitlichen Südasien. Heidelberg 2009’ in *H-Soz-u-Kult*, 02.02.2010, <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/2010-1-081>.

twentieth century, as well as his translation of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, needs to be discussed in detail, which will be done in the next section

## JADUNATH SARKAR'S INFLUENCE ON MUGHAL HISTORIOGRAPHY AND HIS TRANSLATION OF THE *MA'ĀSIR-I 'ĀLAMGĪRĪ*

Exactly 160 years after Musta'idd Ḥān had finished his *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* in 1710, Maulawī Āgā Aḥmad 'Alī (died 1873) published the first edition of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* in 1871.<sup>34</sup> But it was not until 1947, the year of India's independence from the British and almost exactly 240 years after Aurangzīb's death, that Sir Jadunath Sarkar finally presented the official translation of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* in English.<sup>35</sup>

In his recently published study on Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Dipesh Chakrabarty places the outstanding achievements of Sarkar at the forefront.<sup>36</sup> However, the latter's career was also characterised to a large extent by many concessions to the British. It is precisely this 'tension' that Chakrabarty concentrates on in his analysis.<sup>37</sup> While our source is mentioned in Chakrabarty's study only very briefly (the author instead focuses on Sarkar's socio-political environment), we can still relate Chakrabarty's notion of 'tension' to our text. Sarkar indeed managed to translate one of the most important sources on Aurangzīb's reign into English for the first time. However, he also produced a one-sided picture of this powerful Muslim ruler, namely the ultra-orthodox temple destroyer and Hindu hater, which served British purposes well. A substantial part of the legitimacy of British rule in India was grounded in their putative role as maintainers of peaceful co-existence between the subcontinent's religions. It is in this context that Sanjay Subrahmanyam, in one of his earlier reviews, characterised Jadunath Sarkar as a 'happy neocolonialist'.<sup>38</sup>

With his impressive number of translations, Sarkar significantly influenced the discourse on Mughal rule and contributed decisively to the making of a classic narrative of India's early modern period: this he did by particularly focusing on their most controversial ruler,

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<sup>34</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, Persian ed. Āgā Aḥmad 'Alī, Calcutta, 1871.

<sup>35</sup> Jadunath Sarkar (trans.), *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī. A History of the Emperor Aurangzīb- 'Ālamgīr (reigned 1658-1707 A.D.) of Sāqī Must'ad Ḥān*, Calcutta, 1947.

<sup>36</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, *The Calling of History. Sir Jadunath Sarkar and his Empire of Truth*, Chicago, 2015.

<sup>37</sup> Idem, 11ff.

<sup>38</sup> Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Review: Arun Shourie's 'Eminent Historians'' in *India Today*, 7 Dec 1998, <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/book-review-of-eminent-historians-by-arun-shourie/1/265372.html>, last accessed 6/12/2011.

Aurangzīb Alamgir. Heidi Pauwels and Monika Horstmann grasp Sarkar's wide-ranging influence on the historiography surrounding Aurangzīb concisely:

The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707 as Alamgir) is often cast as a tyrant who antagonized his Shi'a, Sikh and Hindu subjects through his "bigotry." Some see this as the root cause for the decline of the Mughal Empire. This negative view goes back to Sarkar's seminal work (5 vols. 1912-24) (...).<sup>39</sup>

The early Mughal rulers governed with tolerance, especially in regards to their Hindu subjects, and showed high levels of interest in an intense cultural exchange with their neighbours. However, it has been held that this all changed when Aurangzīb's decidedly orthodox and fundamentalist method of government confounded this well-balanced system. Not surprisingly, his death in 1707 caused large parts of the empire to rise against the Mughals. In his lifetime, Aurangzīb had thus fuelled the later decline of the Mughal Empire, or so the classic argumentation goes:<sup>40</sup> 'Written as narrative 'high political history' in a tragic

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<sup>39</sup> See the abstract from the last ECSAS-conference (Zurich, 23-26 July 2014), <http://www.nomadit.co.uk/easas/ecsas2014/panels.php5?PanelID=2423> [last accessed 20 February 2014]. In their most recent important collaboration, Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam additionally stress that '(...) the conventional treatment in works such as S.K. Srivastava, *Sir Jadunath Sarkar, the Historian at work* (Delhi, 1989) is in need of considerable revision'. See Alam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 11 footnote 25.

<sup>40</sup> This explanation can be found in basically all introductions to the history of early modern India and dominates the debate on Aurangzīb's reign. See first of all Jadunath Sarkar, *A Short History of Aurangzib, 1618-1707*, Calcutta, 1930. In the following years, plenty has been written on Aurangzīb's reign, pro and contra. Chandra Jnan was essentially the first to focus on the emperor's pragmatism, see idem, 'Aurangzēb and Hindu Temples' in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, vol. 5, 1957, 247-254; idem, 'Ālamgīr's Grant to Hindu Pujārīs' in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, vol. 6, 1958, 55-65; idem, 'Freedom of Worship for the Hindus under 'Ālamgīr' in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, vol. 6, 1958, 124-125; idem, 'Ālamgīr's Patronage of Hindū Temples' in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, vol. 6, 1958, 208-213; idem, 'Ālamgīr's Attitude towards Non-Muslim Institutions' in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, vol. 7, 1959, 36-39; idem, 'Ālamgīr's Grant to a Brahmin' in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, vol. 7, 1959, 99-100. 20 years later, Sajida S. Alvi focused primarily on the function of rhetoric in the three main Mughal chronicles written under Aurangzīb, which had been totally neglected by her former colleagues, see idem, 'The Historians of Awrangzeb. A Comparative Study of Three Primary Sources' in Donald Little (ed.), *Essays on Islamic Civilization Presented to Niyazi Berkes*, Leiden, 1976, 57-73; However, Alvi also seems to remain in Sarkar's footsteps, who, as mentioned above, focused on historical facts and totally ignored the author's narrative strategies: at the end of her pioneering study, Alvi paradoxically falls back on Sarkar's argumentation by classifying the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* as a rather inferior source, totally neglecting crucial aspects such as the time in which the text was written, the multiple authorship, and the issue of intended recipients, etc. Thus, by quoting a part of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, Alvi concludes: 'All such details seem superfluous, particularly when we see the author giving little or no attention to historically crucial events.' Ibid. 60. The leading question of *why* the author(s) probably left out several crucial events is totally ignored. Nothing really changed until the compelling call in Katherine Brown's important article 'Did Aurangzeb Ban Music? Questions for the Historiography of His Reign' in *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2007, 77-120. Here, Brown criticises 'the historical veracity of Aurangzeb's ban on music, by noting that historians of early modern South Asia need to seriously reconsider the received knowledge of the content and tenor of Aurangzeb's reign'. This is quoted from the very useful blog <http://mughalist.blogspot.it/search?q=aurangzeb> (last accessed 10/01/2013). Crucial studies were also presented by Richard Eaton (ed.), *Essays on Islam and Indian History*, New Delhi, 2000; Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam*, Chicago, 2004; also Manohar Lal Bhatia, *The Ulama, Islamic Ethics and Courts under the Mughals. Aurangzīb Revisited*, New Delhi, 2006; Munis Faruqi, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire, 1504-1719*, New York, 2012.

mode, (...) [Jadunath Sarkar] claims to show how the highly intelligent Aurangzīb eventually fell victim to his own religious attitudes, which in turn influenced the eventual fate of the empire over which he ruled.<sup>41</sup>

However, it was not only the British who profited from such a polarised interpretation of the history of early modern India: the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) did so as well. This became particularly clear in their published series, the *History and Culture of the Indian People*.<sup>42</sup> Following his aforementioned seminal work on the decline of the Mughals,<sup>43</sup> Sarkar finished the universally used translation of one of the most important chronicles reporting on Aurangzīb's reign, the *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, in 1947. Both the choice of the topic and the date of release could not have been more explosive. While India was in the throes of celebrating independence from the British in 1947, Sarkar published his work in the prestigious *Royal Asiatic Society* as an allegedly accurate translation<sup>44</sup> of this important text.

In his introduction, Sarkar roughly assessed the work of the Muslim historian Aḥmad 'Alī and implied his responsibility for numerous errors and inaccuracies.<sup>45</sup> Upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that Sarkar portrayed Aurangzīb as a ruler whose sole aim was the uncompromising spread of Islam throughout India by quite deliberately manipulating the source: he used incorrect translations,<sup>46</sup> brushed up important passages,<sup>47</sup> labelled sections with misleading headings,<sup>48</sup> and deployed other questionable editorial tactics.<sup>49</sup> Although he admitted that the text had some interesting passages, his judgment clearly remained negative:

The *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī* has been written in a very much abridged form compared with the *Nāmahs* (...) The loss is really one of the flowers of rhetoric (...) Consequently in many places it reads like a dry list of official postings and promotions as in our Government Gazettes. In this (Sarkar's) translation (...) the prolix wording of some sentences has been replaced by a plain

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<sup>41</sup> Alam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 11.

<sup>42</sup> Siehe Ramesh Majumdar (ed.), *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, vol. 3 (*The Classical Age, 320-750*), vol. 5 (*The Struggle for Empire*), vol. 6 (*The Delhi Sultanate, 1300-1526*) and vol. 7 (*The Moghul Empire, 1526-1707*), Bombay, 1954, 1957, 1960, 1974, quoted from Kulke, *Indische Geschichte bis 1750*, 158.

<sup>43</sup> Jadunath Sarkar, *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*, 4 vols., Calcutta, 1932-1938.

<sup>44</sup> Idem, *Ma'āsir-i- 'Ālamgīrī*, introduction, vi.

<sup>45</sup> Idem, vii.

<sup>46</sup> I will discuss the incorrect translation of the theological concept of *bid'a* in more detail in the third chapter.

<sup>47</sup> See, for example, the brushing up of the text's poems on the first page: I will argue that such poetry fulfils a crucial role in the author's narrative strategy, the text's overall tone, and how its opening functions, see e.g. ibd., *Ma'āsiri 'Ālamgīrī*, 44, where Sarkar admits that he cut '(...) twenty-two lines of trite remarks.

<sup>48</sup> See Sarkar's heading 'austerity at court' for the eleventh year of reign, see ibd., 45.

<sup>49</sup> On Sarkar's errors in his translations see also Brown, *Did Aurangzeb Ban Music*.



recital of their substance, and many trite reflections and moralizations (...) have been omitted altogether; also, verses and long laudatory phrases.<sup>50</sup>

Sarkar's contemporaries uncritically accepted his derogatory opinion of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*. For instance, just a few years after Sarkar's translation, Richard Burn summarised the source in his volume of the *Cambridge History of India* as 'a complete history of Aurangzīb's reign, based upon state papers but very condensed, the first ten years being abridged from *'Ālamgir-nāma*'.<sup>51</sup> As will be shown in the next section, their judgement remains popular today.

### THE FATE OF MUSTĀ'IDD ḤĀN AND HIS *MA'ĀṢIR-I 'ĀLAMGĪRĪ* IN RELATION TO CURRENT RESEARCH IN MUGHAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

In terms of analysing Indo-Persian chronicles, a turning point was reached in the late 1960s with Peter Hardy's study,<sup>52</sup> which has often been reviewed as 'ground-breaking'.<sup>53</sup> Hardy could rely on some important articles,<sup>54</sup> but, as Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam suggested in their recently published study, there is still no overview of Indo-Persian historiography available in English.<sup>55</sup> Nonetheless, they point to Stephan Conermann's study, despite the fact that it is written in German, as a major exception, praising it as an 'ambitious reconsideration'.<sup>56</sup>

However, in respect to an analysis of the historiographical works of Aurangzīb's reign, it was not until Sajida Alvi's important study in 1979, where she investigated the three most important of Aurangzīb's chroniclers and their texts, that a major turning point was reached.<sup>57</sup> Although Alvi's study and her pioneering analyses of Mughal historiography of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are undoubtedly of great importance,<sup>58</sup> our text and its

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<sup>50</sup> Sarkar, *Ma'āṣir-i- 'Ālamgiri*, vi.

<sup>51</sup> Richard Burn (ed.), *The Cambridge History of India*, vol. 4. *The Mughal Period*, Cambridge, 1937, 583.

<sup>52</sup> Peter Hardy, *Historians of Medieval India*, London 1960.

<sup>53</sup> Conermann, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*, 27.

<sup>54</sup> For example, see Abdur Rashid's important analysis, 'The Treatment of History by Muslim Historians in Mughal Official and Biographical Works' in Cyril Philips (ed.), *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, London, 1961, 139-151.

<sup>55</sup> Alam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 1.

<sup>56</sup> That Anglo-American scientists admit German-speaking Mughal researchers such a prominent place remains exceptional. See Eva Orthmann's remarks on the important study of Nader Purnaqcheband, idem, 'Rezension von A. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign. Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam*, New York, 2012' in *sehepunkte*, 13, 2013, <http://www.sehepunkte.de/2013/07/22599.html>, last accessed 6/6/2014.

<sup>57</sup> Sajida Alvi, *The Historians of Awrangzeb*.

<sup>58</sup> Idem (trans.), *Mir'at al-'Ālam: History of Emperor Awangzeb 'Ālamgir. Political History*, vol. I, Lahore, 1979; idem: *Mir'at al-'Ālam: History of Emperor Awangzeb 'Ālamgir. The Biographies of the 'ulama', Sufis, Calligraphers and Poets*, vol. II, Lahore, 1979.

author have maintained their bad image, as Alvi accused Musta‘idd Ḥān of a careless, even sloppy, way of writing history.<sup>59</sup> One can say that the promising turn of the 1960s passed over our text entirely. The classic approach to Indo-Persian historiographical texts, namely citing the sources one by one without any deeper methodological approach and simply referring to Sarkar’s translation in the case of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, still remains widespread. This becomes particularly problematic when authors work with so controversial a source as the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. So far, the large number of studies mentioning the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* treat the text in the aforementioned manner, totally ignoring its historical origins, the former author’s working techniques, and the specific socio-cultural conditions: they also fail to consider the problems of Sarkar’s translation.

The consequences of this simplified treatment of such a crucial text can be seen in John Richard’s important work on the Mughal Empire in the *New Cambridge History of India*. When dealing with Aurangzīb’s époque, he ultimately reproduces the classical narrative of the evil Aurangzīb and his good brother Dārā (this dualism will be discussed in detail in chapter five) and only quotes from Sarkar’s translation.<sup>60</sup> The fact that Sarkar cut out numerous sections of the chronicle and deleted most of the poems is completely ignored, even though these excerpts significantly contribute to the understanding of the underlying tone of the text.

Furthermore, since Sarkar fitted his translation with an index on Aurangzīb’s temple destruction, the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* has become one of the main references for documenting Aurangzīb’s religious bigotry and his numerous violent campaigns against the infidels.<sup>61</sup> Thus, it seems that Musta‘idd Ḥān’s *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, along with many other Mughal texts which either remain untranslated or have been analysed without any deeper methodological approach,<sup>62</sup> is only worth quoting in order to prove Aurangzīb’s bigotry and his destruction of Hindu temples. Phrases like the following show the general interpretation of our chronicler and his text: ‘The chronicles of his [Aurangzīb’s] rule (...) told of royal orders to demolish Hindu temples. The *Maasir-i Alamgiri* by Muḥammad Saki Musta‘idd Ḥān, for example, describe the destruction of temples.’<sup>63</sup> And, even more pointedly: ‘(...) It may be mentioned here that the temple destruction order passed by Aurangzīb is mentioned only in one

<sup>59</sup> Idem, *The Historians of Awangrzeb*, 78.

<sup>60</sup> John Richard, *The Mughal Empire*, New Delhi, 1993, 160 ff.

<sup>61</sup> Sarkar, *Ma‘āṣir-i Ālamgiri*, 349.

<sup>62</sup> Rajeev Kinra, *Writing Self, Writing Empire. Āandar-bhān Brahman and the Cultural World of the Indo-Persian State Secretary*, Oakland, 2015, 12.

<sup>63</sup> Benjamin Liebermann, *Remaking Identities. God, Nation, and Race in World History*, Lanham, 2013, 149.

contemporary historical source, i.e., the *Maasiri-i-Alamgiri*.<sup>64</sup> Occasionally, the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* is not even mentioned when discussing major Indo-Persian sources: this is the case even in the latest overviews like Asim Roy's article on *Indo-Persian Historical Thoughts and Writings* in the recently published *Cambridge History of Historical Writing*.<sup>65</sup> Equally, in the recent study *Religious Cultures in Early Modern India - New Perspectives*, Heidi Pauwels refers to our author by quoting from Sarakar's translation in order to highlight his '(...) picture of religious polarization' in Aurangzīb's period.<sup>66</sup>

Although there was certainly a turning point in regards to the interpretation of Indo-Persian chronicles in the 1970s, this had no effect on the understanding of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*: the text is still used as one of the main textual sources when it comes to attesting the ultra-orthodox character of Aurangzīb's rule and his martial Muslim entourage, who untidily broke with all the cultural and political achievements of their allegedly tolerant predecessors, thus initiating the end of the Mughal dynasty.<sup>67</sup> In the following discussion, we will approach the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* and the working techniques of our author in a different manner. We will see that the text is much more complex and multifaceted than was previously thought and we will also better understand why an analysis of the author's compilation techniques is useful and will provide new results. However, before I present my approach to this text, I will finish the discussion on Mughal historiography, and the role of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* within it, by referring quickly to the first narratological analyses of Mughal texts, as these studies strongly influenced my work.

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<sup>64</sup> Salma Farooqui, *A Comprehensive History of India. From the Twelfth to the Mid-Eighteenth Century*, New Delhi, 2011, 260.

<sup>65</sup> See, for example, Asim Roy's latest article, which does not mention the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* at any point: see idem, 'Indo-Persian Historical Thoughts and Writings.'

<sup>66</sup> This is by no means a general criticism of Pauwels' crucial contributions to the current historiographical research on early modern India; I only want to stress the fact that our author and his *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* are generally cited to emphasise the text's allegedly fundamentalist religious tone. See, idem, *A Tale of Two Temples. Mathurā's Keśavadeva and Orchhā's Caturbhujadeva*, in Rosalind O'Hanlon/David Washbrook (eds.), *Religious Cultures in Early Modern India. New Perspectives*, London, 2012, 213-243, 233.

<sup>67</sup> For a modern current description that still uses the classic argumentation, see Amina Steinfels, 'Aurangzīb (1618-1707)' in Gerhard Böwering, Patricia Crone, et al. (eds.), *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, Princeton, 2013, 50.

## THE FIRST NARRATOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO MUGHAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

Stefan Leder and Hillary Kilpatrick, in their pioneering article *Classical Arabic Prose Literature*, have appealed to scholars to work with Arabic texts in a new way.<sup>68</sup> Instead of only evaluating the content of the sources, future researchers should also try to work with new approaches in literary studies, by which they mean a narratological approach. Unfortunately, nothing has been done since then. Nevertheless, Leder continued to work within this field over the next ten years and published several other important studies. Here, he was joined by Daniel E. Beaumont, who picked up this approach in the middle of the 1990s.<sup>69</sup> However, it was not until Hakan Özkan that narratological analysis was used in a detailed and focused way.<sup>70</sup> It is mainly in his last study, *Kitāb al-Farağ ba'da š-šidda of Abū 'Alī al-Muḥassin at-Tanūḥī*,<sup>71</sup> where he analyses the structure of the narrative in the aforementioned manner. He also focuses on the analysis of several anecdotes; this is an extremely interesting aspect, as these parts of the texts are very rarely at the centre of historical analysis, even though they function as crucial parts of narrative strategy.

It is safe to say that this literature firstly brought up new ideas and results about the use of novel methods when dealing with (Islamic) historical texts and, secondly, that these studies are primarily focused on prose literature, which is not important for a narratological analysis. However, there are two more studies which are crucial for my project, as their focus lies on the narratological analysis of Mughal chronicles. The first is Stephan Conermann's study, which was the first detailed study within the field of Mughal historiography to use narratological methods to analyse Mughal historiographical texts in terms of their formal aesthetic construction.<sup>72</sup> The author argues that the linguistic form and structure of historical depictions are unavoidable historical problems and must therefore be analysed accordingly.

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<sup>68</sup> Stefan Leder, 'The Paradigmatic Character of Madā'inīs shūra Narration' in *Studia Islamica* 88 (1998), 35-54; idem. (ed.), *Story-Telling in the Framework of Non-Fictional Arabic Literature*, Wiesbaden, 1998. Yet another pioneering study is Marilyn Waldman, *Toward a Theory of Historical Narrative. A Case Study in Perso-Islamicate Historiography*, Columbus/Ohio, 1980.

<sup>69</sup> Daniel Beaumont, 'Hard-Boiled. Narrative Discourse in Early Modern Muslim Traditions' in *Studia Islamica*, no. 83, 1996, 5-31.

<sup>70</sup> Hakan Özkan, 'Du rôle de la poésie dans les récits du livre al-Farağ ba'd al-šidda d'at-Tanūḥī', in *Annales Islamologiques*, vol. 40, 2006, 83-106; ibd., *Narrengeschichten und die scheinbare Unordnung der Prosakomposition im Kitāb al-bayān wa-t-abyān des 'Amr b. Baḥr al-ḡāḥiẓ - Untersuchungen zum ḡāḥiẓschen adab*, in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, vol. 155, 2005, 105-124.

<sup>71</sup> Idem, *Narrativität im Kitāb al-Farağ ba'da š-šidda des Abū 'Alī al-Muḥassin at-Tanūḥī* (= Islamkundliche Untersuchungen; Vol. 280), Berlin, 2008 and the review of Stephan Conermann of Özkan's study in *sehepunkte* 8, 2008, Nr. 10, <http://www.sehepunkte.de/2008/10/15082.html>.

<sup>72</sup> Stephan Conermann, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*.

The main part of the study analyses Mughal historiographical literature (135-355) through the following criteria: historical thinking, the theory of rule and the ideal ruler, and processing strategies by which contingencies are experienced (*Kontingenzerfahrungen*). This section also examines the narratological aspects of the chronicles (style, narrative techniques, the mixture of verse and prose, and plagiarism). Finally, by comparing different historiographical genres, the author shows the continuity of Persian historiography. After finishing this study in 2002, the author expanded his focus to include the narratological interpretation of early modern non-European sources more generally.<sup>73</sup>

Next to Conermann, Nader Purnaqcheband's work on the second Mughal Emperor Humāyūn (gov. 1530-1540 and 1555-1556) and the account written by his servant Jauhar Āftābchī, the *Tazkirat al-Waqi'āt*, are of great importance.<sup>74</sup> Similar to Conermann, Purnaqcheband distances himself clearly from the classical structuralist point of view, which tended to reduce the text to symbols. Rather, he states, we should focus on non-linguistic elements, like the setting, the plot, and emotions, which are crucial for generating the text. This means taking a very critical look at postmodern approaches like those of Derrida, Haydn, Barthes, and Foucault, since these could lead us to cognitive and epistemological nihilism. Instead of presenting the study in detail, I will rather focus on Purnaqcheband's *steps* towards the text, which are the perfect role model for my first investigation. It is also worth bearing in mind that a comparison between my text and that of Purnaqcheband might be extremely fruitful. Finally, in one of her pioneering articles, Sholeh Quinn analysed the narrative portions of Mughal and Safawid historiographical texts, arguing that these often functioned as hidden mirrors for princes.<sup>75</sup>

These steps towards the source have a lot in common with the methodological steps I present in chapter five; nevertheless, I would like to discuss my approach more clearly and understandably at this point.

After analysing the content of the text, the literary structure has to be analysed (do we find a very sober style? What about the direct and indirect speech of the author?). The elements of the narrative are crucial and so we must ask the following questions: What are the aims of the anecdotes? Where do we find elements of salvation and why? To what extent do dreams and visions frame the text?

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<sup>73</sup> Idem, *Was sind Genres? Nicht-abendländische Kategorisierungen von Gattungen*, Berlin, 2011.

<sup>74</sup> Purnaqcheband, *Strategien der Kontingenzbewältigung*.

<sup>75</sup> Sholeh Quinn, 'Through the Looking Glass: Kingly Virtues in Safavid and Mughal Historiography' in *Journal of Persianate Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2010, 143-155.

Do we find similarities with dreams in other Mughal chronicles and what are these dreams telling us? How should we deal with them?

Here, the classic approach of Rebekka Habermas<sup>76</sup> in dealing with dreams is very interesting. Or, in the words of the authors of *Textures of Time*, ‘we do an injustice to the sources if we begin to filter their contents through a process of evaluation informed by our notion of what constitutes a fact.’<sup>77</sup> Neglecting these dreams and visions in the *Tazkirat al-Waqi’āt*, for example, would be big mistake; however, this is exactly what scholars have done when dealing with this source. Purnaqcheband argues that it is precisely these parts of the text that offer the main intention of the chronicle; that is, the legitimisation of Mughal rule in Northern India around 1580, the time in which the *Tazkirat al-Waqi’āt* was written.

Another extremely interesting approach of Purnaqcheband’s study is to differ between affective and cognitive representation. Whereas the cognitive representation symbolises, let us say, the polished and corrected parts of the texts (such as anecdotes), the affective representation deals with the cracks and humiliations the king had to suffer (be it Humāyūn or Aurangzīb).<sup>78</sup>

In this context, Alam and Subrahmanyam suggest that we should unmask the hidden narrative structures of a text such as the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* and analyse its normative meaning in detail:

(...) one of the central reasons why technology allegedly remained static was the cultural attitude of the elite, which was portrayed as lacking scientific curiosity and technological application. Aside from its place in such blunt-edged culturalist formulations, ‘ideology’, usually read simply as ‘religion’, had to be seen as largely irrelevant for purposes of historical analysis (...) Part of the reason for this appeared to be the need to use certain texts [such as an important chronicle like the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, TK] quite literally, rather than consider the possibility that they may have been ideologically motivated. The notion of the ‘normative’ text thus did not feature in these writing for the most part.<sup>79</sup>

Considering all this, might it not be the case that behind the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, generally described as short, monotonous, and of inferior quality, the text’s actual normative

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<sup>76</sup> Rebekka Habermas, ‘Wunder, Wunderliches, Wunderbares. Zur Profanisierung eines Deutungsmusters in der Neuzeit’ in Richard van Dülmen (ed.), *Armut, Liebe, Ehre. Studien zur historischen Kulturforschung*, Frankfurt / Main, 1988, 38-66.

<sup>77</sup> Rao, *Textures of Time*, 99.

<sup>78</sup> Tilmann Kulke, ‘Review: Nader Purnaqcheband, Strategien der Kontingenzbewältigung. Der Mogulherrscher Humāyūn (r. 1530-1540 und 1555-1556) dargestellt in der “Tazkirat al-Waqi’āt” seines Leibdieners Jauhar Āftābī, Schenefeld, 2007’ in *sehepunkte*, 11, 2011, Nr. 6, <http://www.sehepunkte>

<sup>79</sup> Alam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 22.

significance can be found? Is there a hidden agenda (e.g. legitimisation of power)? If so, how is the hidden agenda narratively produced? In order to achieve this, is it not the case that Musta‘idd Hān used a skilled and specific narrative technique? If so, what does this technique look like and how does it work?

This narratological approach, which I will discuss in detail in chapter 1, also includes a detailed analysis of the author himself: Who is our author? Where did he come from and what did his education and milieu look like? Does he speak in the introduction about his methods? If not, can we derive a methodological approach from his work? How does he quote? What sources did he use? Can we say something about his compilation techniques? Does he raise a claim to objectivity and in what way is this objectivity narratively produced? How is the work organised? Are literary elements such as tension implemented into the narrative?

In regard to my narratological approach, I refer mainly to German-speaking exegetical studies,<sup>80</sup> which are, in some essential points, ahead of literary studies; nevertheless, several important examples of the latter have also been published in the last few years.<sup>81</sup> At some places in the following thesis, a comparative perspective on certain trends in contemporary Europe seemed necessary. However, these short excursions are not to be seen as direct comparisons, as this would require a specific analysis of the relevant political and social structures, which cannot be done at this point. Also, I am quite aware of the danger posed by the ever-present spectre of parallels and analogies - the search for the Indian Vico, the Chinese Descartes, or the Arab Montaigne.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, I rather seek to consider, in a prudent manner, some results of the analysis from a broader perspective. In this sense, I refer to Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, who both raised the question of whether the

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<sup>80</sup> See Finnern, *Narratologie*; Stefan Ark Nietzsche and Helmut Utzschneider (eds.), *Arbeitsbuch literaturwissenschaftliche Bibelauslegung. Eine Methodenlehre zur Exegese des Alten Testaments*, Gütersloh 2001; Ute E. Eisen, *Die Poetik der Apostelgeschichte. Eine narratologische Studie*, Göttingen 2006.

<sup>81</sup> Brian Richardson, ‘Recent Concepts of Narrative and the Narratives of Narrative Theory’ in *Style*, vol. 34, 2000, 168-175; Volker Nünning, *Von der strukturalistischen Narratologie zur „postklassischen“ Erzähltheorie. Ein Überblick über neue Ansätze - Theoretische Positionen - Transdisziplinäre Perspektiven*, Tübingen, 2004. In many ways, I also rely on the work of Stephan Conermann and the further approaches he has used since his study of 2002, see idem, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*; idem, (ed.), *Innovation oder Plagiat? Kompilationstechniken in der Vormoderne*, Berlin, 2015; idem, ‘Einleitung’ in idem. (ed.), *Modi des Erzählens in nicht-abendländischen Texten*, Berlin, 2013, 7-14; idem, (ed.), *Islamwissenschaft als Kulturwissenschaft I. Historische Anthropologie. Ansätze und Möglichkeiten*, Schenefeld, 2007; idem, (ed.) *Kulturspezifische Erzählstrategien in „nicht-abendländischen“ Lebensdarstellungen*, Berlin, 2013; idem, ‘Narrative Strukturen in aṭ-Ṭabarī (gest. 923) Ta’rīḥ ar-rusul wal-mulūk wal-ḥulafā’ in idem. (ed.), *Modi des Erzählens in nicht-abendländischen Texten*, Berlin, 2013, 209-256; idem, ‘Reiseberichte als Erzähltexte’ in Bekim Agai and Stephan Conermann (eds.), *Wenn einer eine Reise tut, hat er was zu erzählen. Präfiguration - Konfiguration - Refiguration in muslimischen Reiseberichten*, Berlin, 2013, 7-29; idem, (ed.), *Was ist Kulturwissenschaft? Zehn Antworten aus den kleinen Fächern*, Bielefeld, 2012; idem, *Was sind Genres*.

<sup>82</sup> At this point, I would like to thank Sebastian Conrad for his detailed answers to my many questions over the years. See also idem, *Globalgeschichte. Eine Einführung*, Munich, 2013, 192.

closely interlinked and highly efficient milieu of Mughal writers and secretaries (*munšī*) could be compared with the European *republiques des lettres*.<sup>83</sup> Some similar parallels and references to specific comparisons arose in my analysis too. For example, I try to explain the melancholic tone of the text through reference to the global ‘crisis of conscience’ of the seventeenth century, exactly the period in which our author grew up. Musta‘idd Ḥān’s striking insistence on the importance of discipline and work ethic also appears in a new light when we extend our view beyond the borders of the Mughal Empire.

Before finally presenting the structure of my thesis, it is necessary to do make some final remarks on my work with my main source, the *Ma’āsiri-ī ‘Ālamgīrī*

#### FINAL REMARKS: ON MY WORK WITH MAULAWĪ ĀĠĀ KHĀN’S EDITION AND SIR JADUNATH’S TRANSLATION

Sarkar’s intention to stamp Maulawī ĀĠā Aḥmad ‘Alī’s edition from 1871 as an inferior work is already noticeable in the introduction,<sup>84</sup> as well as in his often condescending comments when he found a mistake. This is particularly interesting, as Aḥmad ‘Alī was known as an excellent and committed scholar of the second half of the nineteenth century who intervened in numerous debates.<sup>85</sup> He also contributed repeatedly to the successful series *Bibliotheca Indica*, where his contributions and editions earned much praise in scholarly circles.<sup>86</sup> The errors identified by Sarkar in the manuscript are actually very few in terms of numbers: they generally consist of slightly inaccurate transcriptions of names and places and are thus by no means as dramatic as Sarkar wanted to indicate, since such errors can occur in any edition.<sup>87</sup> Ironically, even Sarkar made some mistakes in his translation,<sup>88</sup> which will also probably happen in the present study. After all, it is almost impossible to produce a completely accurate translation, since the matter will ultimately come down to interpretation, as Umberto Eco argued.<sup>89</sup>

However, it was Sarkar’s condescending attitude towards his Muslim colleague and his arrogant conviction that he had delivered an error-free translation which irritated me from the

<sup>83</sup> Alam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 427.

<sup>84</sup> Sarkar, *Ma’āsiri-ī ‘Ālamgīrī*, viii-ix

<sup>85</sup> Charles Storey, *Persian Literature. A Bio-Bibliographical Survey*, vol. 3, part 1, Leiden, 1984, 34, footnote 1; Nabi Hadi, *Dictionary of Indo-Persian Literature*, New Delhi, 1995, 42.

<sup>86</sup> *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta 1875* (Jan.-Dec.), 35-36.

<sup>87</sup> Sarkar, *Ma’āsiri-ī ‘Ālamgīrī*, 105, 165, 191, 265, 289, 321.

<sup>88</sup> Idem, 179, 221, 257 and as good example of his direct intervention also 312 and 314 (not to mention the cutting of several poems and misleading titles).

<sup>89</sup> Umberto Eco, *Mouse or Rat? Translation as Negotiation*, London, 2004.



outset of my work with the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*. This is not to mention his snide judgements on Musta'idd Hān's work on the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* and the text's quality in general.<sup>90</sup> These irritating convictions of an early twentieth-century historian, which certainly correspond to a former *Zeitgeist*, are also discussed by Chakrabarty.<sup>91</sup> It will be shown that Sarkar in fact intervened at crucial points in the text. He did so, for instance, by deleting poems, inserting misleading headlines, and even deliberately making erroneous translations in order to change Musta'idd Hān's narrative strategy and prove that Aurangzīb was a backwards-looking Hindu hater. Sarkar states that:

I have inserted the page numbers of the Persian original in the body of my translation, so that any curious reader can easily satisfy himself that this is a complete reproduction in English of the historical matter of the original text.<sup>92</sup>

I did exactly this and found his claim to be somewhat misleading. Nonetheless, the present work should not be understood as a fundamental critique of Jadunath Sarkar's translation of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, from which I greatly benefited.

However, I will always come back to his translation on those occasions when I detect his direct interventions in the text in order to propose an alternative translation and reinterpretation. Sarkar never makes any philological errors, and I certainly do not hold myself to be his equal in philological matters. In that sense, I often quote directly from Sarkar when I do not find any differences between the Persian edition and his translation.<sup>93</sup> Nonetheless, as will be shown, Sarkar did change Musta'idd Hān's intentions, sometimes dramatically. Nonetheless, as will be shown, Sarkar did change Musta'idd Hān's intentions, sometimes dramatically. In this sense, Aḥmad 'Alī's edition turned out to be very useful: it was certainly deserving of the praise it received in the year of its publication,<sup>94</sup> and has recently been used by Munis Faruqi in one of his latest studies.<sup>95</sup>

Sarkar, together with his colleagues,<sup>96</sup> did everything possible to identify mistakes in his edition by comparing each word with the manuscript available to him;<sup>97</sup> thus, it has not been

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<sup>90</sup> Sarkar, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, viii.

<sup>91</sup> Chakrabarty, *The Calling of History*, chpt. 4, 133-165.

<sup>92</sup> Sarkar, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, viii.

<sup>93</sup> If I did so, I also kept his transcription.

<sup>94</sup> *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1875 (Jan.-Dec)*, 35-36. Full text available on [archive.org](https://archive.org/stream/proceedingsofasi1875asia/proceedingsofasi1875asia_djvu.txt), [https://archive.org/stream/proceedingsofasi1875asia/proceedingsofasi1875asia\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/proceedingsofasi1875asia/proceedingsofasi1875asia_djvu.txt), last accessed 19/5/2012.

<sup>95</sup> See e.g. in chapter 3 (66-133), chapter 6 (235-273) and chapter 7 (274-308).

<sup>96</sup> Sarkar, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, viii-ix.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

deemed necessary to utilise the original manuscript of the text in this study. Equally, the goal of the present study is *not* to offer a new edition of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, let alone a new translation.<sup>98</sup> However, with the tools available to me, I will address those sections where Sarkar deliberately deviated from Musta'idd Ḥān's original intentions: I will do so by comparing each quote with Aḥmad 'Alī's 1871 edition. Furthermore, I mostly avoided incorporating Persian transcriptions into my citations. As these quotes are often only very brief, doing so would have significantly interrupted the flow of the text.

## STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The present study seeks to show that Musta'idd Ḥān tried to do everything that he could to present his individual view on Aurangzīb's 50 years of reign to his intended recipient, despite suffering from several limitations. In chapter 1, I introduce those structures that made this articulation possible and give a more detailed discussion of my methodological approach. The prerequisite for Musta'idd Ḥān's often surprisingly assured self-positioning in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* was the growing collective self-confidence of the *munšī* milieu, which consisted of the highly trained secretaries of the imperial administration. This environment can be primarily characterised as a closely intertwined cultural hub of the most educated and ambitious Hindus and Muslims, who contributed through their daily collaboration to the empire's exemplary administration and its expansion.

Because of his many years as a member of the exclusive multicultural milieu of the *munšīs*, the author certainly had a different view of the past and of Aurangzīb's controversial decisions than his archconservative patron 'Ināyat Allāh Ḥān. Moreover, Musta'idd Ḥān was a contemporary witness of the consequences of Aurangzīb's permanent expansion of the empire. When the author took up his pen in 1707 to write the chronicle, the kingdom was experiencing the most serious unrest and rebellions for many years, for which his protagonist was certainly not entirely innocent. Here, Musta'idd Ḥān's specific situation comes into play, his *Sitz im Leben* (setting in life), which I will discuss in the first chapter. Despite his own growing self-confidence and the obvious errors which Aurangzīb committed, M. Ḥān still had to be very careful with his criticism, as he had to deal with the patron of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, the ultra-conservative 'Ināyat Allāh Ḥān, who had once been Aurangzīb's closest adviser. As Musta'idd Ḥān explains in the introduction to the second part of the *Ma'āṣir-i*

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<sup>98</sup> I am very thankful for Steve Smith's suggestions at the early stage of my work, for several talks, and a huge amount of literature.

*‘Ālamgīrī*, his patron wanted a chronicle which consistently praised Aurangzīb without any sort of criticism. ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān was by no means alone in this. Many of Aurangzīb’s former hawks had secured their influence and even strengthened and enlarged their networks in the new government. These factors certainly presented a major obstacle to Musta‘idd Ḥān in regards to placing criticism in Aurangzīb’s official chronicle. However, as will be shown, our author found an excellent solution; through the skilled use of numerous and multi-layered anecdotes, which have not been analysed in previous research and which must therefore receive special attention in the present study, he skilfully managed to express his own view on the past and suggest advice for the new ruler and his government. In this sense, the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* should be interpreted as an *agenda 1710*.

I will present in the second chapter a detailed analysis of the text’s setting. After reading the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, it occurred to me that Musta‘idd Ḥān describes the environment as a strikingly hostile setting for the Mughals. It is because of this specific type of description, which appears at first sight quite monotonous, that previous scholars attributed an inferior literary talent to the author. However, as will be shown, Musta‘idd Ḥān’s particular design of his setting was an essential part of his narrative strategy, as he subtly created a permanent state of emergency. The protagonist and the harried imperial troops became the narrative’s real victims, and their actions and decisions must be interpreted from the victim’s perspective.

On the other hand, Musta‘idd Ḥān contrasted these menacing settings with peaceful and positively described settings, which I present in the second half of this chapter. Here, the protagonist’s truly peaceful character comes to the fore. These peaceful settings are characterised by frequent and detailed descriptions of promotions of loyal Hindu generals, Aurangzīb’s concern for the empire’s children, and his willingness to forgive every man and animal. Through these idealised representations, we recognise again the function of the text as a mirror, an *agenda 1710*, for the new ruler, as he was now expected to behave strictly according to these standards. Moreover, in both settings Musta‘idd Ḥān used several symbols which other scholars have tended to ignore, since they appear only marginally important at first glance. However, they often had a much deeper meaning, as they all were intended to have a special effect on the text’s principal recipient, Šāh’Alam Bahadur. Furthermore, through the use of these symbols, Musta‘idd Ḥān sought to address other highly influential groups at Bahadur’s court, even Hindus and Šī’ites, all of whom tried to expand their influence under the new emperor.

In the third chapter, I will present a detailed enquiry on Musta‘idd Hān’s design of his protagonist Aurangzīb. As will be shown here, the latter is by no means described as a one-sided and stubborn Muslim emperor. Rather, the author tried to create a multifaceted protagonist who would function as a prototype for the new ruler. This was certainly not an easy task for Musta‘idd Hān, considering Aurangzīb’s numerous controversial decisions and their deleterious consequences. A major part of this chapter covers the analysis of the multifaceted emotions which Musta‘idd Hān applied in order to elicit sympathy for his protagonist. So that his intended recipient could develop at least some positive feelings for his predecessor, Musta‘idd Hān did all he could to present Aurangzīb as an isolated and often desperate ruler. This presentation is by no means monotonous; as will be shown, our author used various narrative techniques to achieve many different effects. Cautiously initiating the process of the protagonist’s anthropomorphisation, Musta‘idd Hān used literary techniques such as direct speech and degrading the distance between Aurangzīb and the other characters.

Through the design of an aging, vulnerable, and often melancholic king, Musta‘idd Hān sought to create an emotional connection between the protagonist and Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur. The latter was already 64 years old when he finally gained power in 1707, and he immediately faced one of the empire’s biggest crises. It would have thus been nearly impossible to develop any positive feelings for an eternally young and infallible protagonist who had been in many ways responsible for this crisis. However, as will be shown in chapter three, Musta‘idd Hān successfully reacted to the relationship between his protagonist and his intended recipient, Aurangzīb’s son and successor Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur.

Finally, at the end of the third chapter, I will discuss the protagonist’s essential traits. I began my work on this thesis with rather limited knowledge about Aurangzīb, which corresponded to the classic narrative of him as the ‘bad guy’ of Mughal history; as such, I was anticipating that the author would place religious values into the foreground. However, it soon became clear that Musta‘idd Hān actually had quite different priorities. The author’s ideal Muslim ruler, embodied by his protagonist Aurangzīb, was not an ultra-orthodox tyrant who subordinated everything to his will. Rather, it is striking that Musta‘idd Hān scattered multiple anecdotes throughout the text, all of which sought to present Aurangzīb in a very different light. There are some amazingly unorthodox actions of the protagonist to be found in the text. Furthermore, we meet a purely disciplined and austere ruler who dedicated his life entirely to the fulfilment of work and duty. As will be shown, religion only plays a subordinate role in many sections of the text.

The same realisation occurred while analysing the text's multiple conflicts, which I will present in the fourth chapter. Since the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* is primarily known as one of the major sources of information for the temple destructions that were carried out in Aurangzīb's reign, I assumed that the text would overflow with endless descriptions of violence against the 'infidel' Hindus. No doubt, there are indeed some passages of the text which use violent language and leave no space for an alternative reading. However, a major problem remains: since previous researchers only focused on these excerpts, they all attested that Musta'idd Ḥān favoured Aurangzīb's anti-Hindu campaigns. However, by arguing in this way, many important aspects have been overlooked, not least because Musta'idd Ḥān sought to place such passages in the right perspective. He did so, firstly, by using direct relativisations in relation to each event in order to mitigate their severity. Furthermore, he grouped around each of these anti-Hindu sections several multilayered anecdotes which all fulfilled the same purpose, namely to retrospectively relativise Aurangzīb's decisions, which in many cases had been highly controversial even in his lifetime. All these anecdotes functioned as an indirect warning to the new ruler to refrain from such decisions in the future. This was because Musta'idd Ḥān was not a subservient and uncritical chronicler who cheered for all of his emperor's decisions: this becomes very apparent when we engage in a detailed analysis of his individual design of the past's multiple conflicts.

This use of several narrative techniques, such as the targeted dispersal of anecdotes in order to relativise Aurangzīb's past errors, is the focus of the fifth chapter. Here, I seek to prove that Musta'idd Ḥān made several attempts to examine the history of the former ruler critically and to put controversial events into the right perspective. In this chapter, I will focus on Musta'idd Ḥān's techniques of compilation. The *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* is particularly suited for such an analysis, as it is based on two important preliminary studies: the first ten years of Muḥammad Kāzīm's *'Ālamgīr-nāma* and the second half of Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān's *Mir'āt al- 'ālam*. The questions arise: why and to what extent did Musta'idd Ḥān intervene in these prominent templates and which parts did he decide to incorporate into his own writing? In order to answer these questions, I will present two detailed case studies. The first deals with an analysis of the two rival brothers Dārā and Aurangzīb in the *'Ālamgīr-nāma* and the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, while the second discusses Aurangzīb's highly controversial 'ban' of music in the *Mir'āt al- 'ālam* and the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*.

In order to finish my introduction, I refer once more to Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam. In their joint article *The Making of a Munshī*, the authors highlight the

outstanding importance of the *munšīs* for culture and politics in early modern India: ‘The difficult transition between the information and knowledge regimes of the precolonial and colonial political systems of South Asia was largely, though not exclusively, mediated by scribes (and) writers (...)’.<sup>99</sup> What did the literary work of our *munšī* Musta‘idd Ḥān look like when it was completed, what exactly did he produce and, importantly, which individual narrative techniques did he utilise? The answers to these questions form the content of the present study.

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<sup>99</sup> Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ‘The Making of a Munshi’ in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2004, 61-72.

# CHAPTER 1: MUSTA‘IDD ḤĀN AND THE WORLD OF THE SCRIBE

## SECTION 1: THE AUTHOR.

*Gossip and anecdotes (...) circulated in the literary salons, coffee houses, and bāzārs of the emergent Mughal public sphere (which) became crucial in the construction of collective memories.* - Rajeev

Kinra.<sup>100</sup>

### PRELUDE

In the first section of this first chapter, I will present and discuss Musta‘idd Ḥān’s career and his *oeuvre*, the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. As we shall see, Musta‘idd Ḥān’s life was marked by ups and downs before he was finally allowed to start writing Aurangzīb’s official chronicle in 1707, after the death of his mighty patron. He did so whilst simultaneously expanding his personal career at court.

In part one, we will dedicate ourselves to examining the official office of the court chronicler. Although our author actually never bore this particular title, it is still important that we at least take a brief look at the history of this office, together with the most important people who worked there, in order to gain a general overview of the key persons and works with which our author was familiar. In part two, we will deal with Musta‘idd Ḥān’s milieu, namely that of the *munšīs*. Over the years, his working environment became a cosmopolitan hub in Mughal India, one which guaranteed a successful court career to Hindus and Muslims alike. This experience of long-term cooperation with Hindu scholars, learning Persian perfectly, and successfully adapting to the Mughal administration must have had a significant impact on Musta‘idd Ḥān and his work. However, as we shall see, this specific experience brought about a conflict in his writing process. As an official chronicler from 1707 onwards, he was first and foremost expected to report about Aurangzīb’s heroic deeds; however, Aurangzīb’s anti-Hindu campaigns had already been criticised in the emperor’s lifetime. After becoming familiar with the office of the court chroniclers and our author’s milieu, I will discuss

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<sup>100</sup> Rajeev Kinra, ‘Infantilizing Bābā Dārā. The Cultural Memory of Dārā Shekuh and the Mughal Public Sphere’ in *Journal of Persianate Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2009, 165-93; see also Margrit Pernau and Yunus Jaffery (eds.), *Information and the Public Sphere. Persian Newsletters from Mughal Delhi*, New Delhi, 2009; Babak Rahimi gives an excellent overview on the early modern Islamic public sphere in, ibd., *Theater State and the Formation of an Early Modern Public Sphere in Iran. Studies on Safavid Muharram Rituals, 1590-1641 CE*, Leiden, 2012, (Chapter 2: The Carnavalesque Public: Beyond Habermas), 83-141.

Musta‘idd Hān’s own career under Aurangzīb and his descendants. The need to forward his career meant cooperation with Aurangzīb’s hawks, who had expanded their power and secured their courtly network in the post-Aurangzīb era.

In the second section, I will turn to Musta‘idd Hān’s text, the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. Surprisingly, the existing literature on this important chronicle has analysed it in an entirely one-dimensional manner, simply arguing that our author designed a text in which he consistently welcomed and celebrated the violent actions of his ruler against non-Muslims, especially the Hindus. However, crucial aspects which greatly influenced our author and his work have been constantly overlooked.

In third and final section, I will discuss the methodological approach with which I will approach our text. Here, I explain the narratological approach and seek to discover to what extent specific narratological tools can deliver new results in the field of Mughal historiography. In this regard, I will focus mainly on the analysis of the anecdotes of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, which, so far, have not received any serious attention, as they only had been quoted as evidence of Musta‘idd Hān’s inferior skills as a chronicler and his alleged support of Aurangzīb’s anti-Hindu campaigns. How profitable an analysis of these sections actually can be for producing a better understanding of Musta‘idd Hān’s skilled narrative strategy will be shown at the end of this chapter. Here, for the first time, we will witness on Musta‘idd Hān’s increased self-confidence, as well as the high degree of freedom he possessed to express his own opinion and concerns to his superiors. These two aspects, an increased confidence and a high degree of freedom, characterise the work of our author and his narrative strategy from the second part of the text onwards.

#### THE WORK OF THE OFFICIAL COURT CHRONICLER. THE *ĀMĪR-I AḤBĀR*.

It is nearly impossible to present detailed personal profiles of even the most important Mughal chroniclers.<sup>101</sup> Although we are very well informed in many cases about the official posts an author held during his career, we frequently lack sufficient information about his private life. Abū l-Faḥl ‘Allāmī (died 1602), probably the best-known Mughal chronicler, serves as a good example. On the one hand, the reader of his two works receives detailed information about his emerging career; however, on the other hand, we do not even know to whom he was married. Therefore, the following section is a sketch of this issue, one which presumes a certain social background and biographical experience as the foundation for a career as a court chronicler

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<sup>101</sup> For the section of the *amīr-i aḥbār*, I refer primarily on Conermann, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*, 85-134.



(*amīr-i aḥbār*). What were the reasons behind a Mughal historian's work and in what conditions did he labour? Can we find similarities within the historian's biography and the socio-cultural and literary-historical context in which the author started his work? To what extent were such works shaped by ideological bias and normative requirements?

If an ambitious literary writer was not only aiming for glory and honour, but also for an adequate wage, he needed to try his luck at the Šāh's court or at those of other regional rulers. This primarily meant getting the emperor's attention, something that was much easier for people who were already famous. Hādamīr (died around 1535-6) was already reputed before he arrived at Bābur's (gov. 1526-1530) court, which intellectuals regarded as a peaceful place surrounded by a storm of ongoing quarrels. Hādamīr offered Bābur his chronicle about the latter's time as emperor. It was in this way that 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Lāhaurī (died around 1654-5), an Indian-born Muslim, got the lucrative post of court chronicler. Šāh Jahān summoned the established historian from his retirement in Putna to his capital, where Lāhaurī started his work without having to worry about working in the administration.<sup>102</sup>

The Mughals' reputation as patrons of literary scholars reached far beyond the borders of their empire. This fact is exemplified by the biographies of two Iranian scholars, 'Abd al-Qādir Nihāvandī (died after 1637) and Jalāl ad-Dīn Ṭabāṭabā'ī (died after 1636). In 1634, Ṭabāṭabā'ī arrived at Šāh Jahān's court from Iṣfahān to present him his work, the *šaš fath-i Kāngra*. Obviously, the latter did his job well, as he was granted the office of court chronicler. The voyage of 'Abd al-Qādir from Iran to Burhānpūr to meet the local Mughal governor Ḥān-i Ḥānān 'Abd ar-Raḥīm was also successful. This powerful patron motivated 'Abd al-Qādir to write the *Ma'āṭir-i Raḥīmī* (completed in 1616); in return, the governor provided the chronicler with a fief (*jāgir*) and opened several doors to the higher levels of the Mughal administration. These examples show us that some literary intellectuals, be it Indian-born Muslims or *ši'it*-Iranians, were able to obtain the desirable post of court chronicler on the basis of their established reputations. Achieving a reputation as a respected chronicler could open the doors to the highest and most urgent diplomatic tasks, as this office had such a prestige that it was known beyond the empire's own borders. In 1606, as the Mughals planned a diplomatic mission to the court of Felipe III, the Jesuit missionaries were happy to hear that Ġahāngīr had chosen the well-known Naqīb Ḥān for this duty: 'This idea greatly pleased the Jesuit missionaries, who knew Naqīb Ḥān well: He is a very learned scholar, and a chronicler,

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<sup>102</sup> See John Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, Cambridge, 1993, 138.

and not against the Portuguese,’ wrote Jerónimo Xavier at the time.<sup>103</sup> This is significant, as Musta‘idd Ḥān’s foster father Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān, who had also worked as a chronicler, was sent on an important diplomatic mission to Kabul by Aurangzīb. This fact, as will be shown below, had a significant impact on our author’s perception of Aurangzīb’s policy.

In contrast, many other scholars needed help and connections. This was the case for Abū l-Faḍl ‘Allāmī, who was only able to present himself to Akbar after his brother and father had already established themselves within the emperor’s entourage. Both worked as writers and scholars, although Faizi in particular enjoyed Akbar’s esteem as the teacher of his sons. It was therefore very reasonable for Abū l-Faḍl to seek to present himself as an intellectual at Akbar’s court. In order to do this, he presented the emperor with a poem on the royal throne (*‘āyat al-kursī*, 2:255): his strategy was successful. Abū l-Faḍl granted him a high rank and a secure livelihood. From there on out, he served as Akbar’s ‘main ideologist’ (*Chefideologe*).<sup>104</sup> Abū l-Faḍl perfectly exemplifies the situation of holding two jobs simultaneously at court, a position in which many other Mughal chroniclers found themselves. While starting his work on the *Akbar-nāma* and the *Ā’in-i Akbari* (both completed in 1602 and then continued by Muḥibb ‘Alī Ḥān), he simultaneously held administrative and military posts. Later, he even became the governor of Delhi, a general, and an administrator in the Dekkan.<sup>105</sup>

However, getting that close to the emperor without being renowned as a scholar and without holding an official position beforehand was not the rule. Take, for example, Muḥammad Vāriṭ (died 1680). He was a student of ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Lāhaurī and had worked intensively with the great scholar on his *Pādshah-nāma* (written until 1655-6); as such, he was selected to continue the work as the *amīr-i aḥbar* after Lāhaurī’s death. Nevertheless, it was a long time before Vāriṭ begin his work as an official chronicler. Muḥammad Kāzim (died 1681), whom we will come back to later, was the son of the official historian Muḥammad Amīn Qazvīnī (died after 1646-7). Before becoming a chronicler, Kāzim worked as a secretary (*munši*).<sup>106</sup> Certainly, his father helped him during his first steps at the court by introducing him to important people through whom he finally got the job: Aurangzīb was fond of his elegant officialese.

<sup>103</sup> Jorge Flores, *The Mughal Padshah. A Jesuit Treatise on Emperor Jahangir’s Court and Household*, Leiden 2015, 16.

<sup>104</sup> Conerman, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*, 115.

<sup>105</sup> For Abū l-Faḍl’s career see ibd., 96-101.

<sup>106</sup> See Alam, ‘The Making of a Munši’, 61-72. I will discuss the munši’s *milieu* in detail below.

This being said, there was no special office that lay at the basis of a future career as an *amīr-i aḥbār* for a Mughal emperor. ‘Abd al-Ḥāziq Ḥakīm Ḥuṣḥāl, for example, held the important office of the *‘arz-i mukarrar*.<sup>107</sup> However, he had to work in a lower post before he obtained the prestigious position, much in the same way as Mīrzā Muḥammad Amīn Qazvīnī did. On the other hand, Muḥammad Ṭāhir Āšnā’ ‘Ināyat Ḥān (died 1666-7), the royal librarian who decided to shorten the 2,500 page-long *Pādšāh-nāma* into a more readable version, had already become a high-ranking manṣab in his childhood, since he was the son of a famous minister.<sup>108</sup>

Furthermore, many Mughal historians who started on literary labours on their own initiative had been working within the court administration for a long time and thus began their historical pieces when they were already old. Mu‘tamad Ḥān (died 1639-40) spent much of his life as the royal purser and did not start his work on a chronicle of the Mughal emperors before becoming a famous manṣab minister under Jahāngir. Here, he finally earned a sufficiently considerable reputation for the emperor to trust him with updating his memoirs. The same was the case for Nizām ad- Dīn Aḥmad (died 1594). Although he had been interested in historical works since his youth, he started his history of Muslim rule in India only after working in a highly-placed position in the Mughal court for many years. Thus, both Mu‘tamad Ḥān and Nizām ad-Dīn Aḥmad did not start their work for financial reasons; rather, they were guided by their individual feelings of historical curiosity. Of course, they needed to respect the emperor’s wishes when they wrote their works to ensure they were well received.

It was in this way that they followed the traditional historiographical ideal, which included, *inter alia*, the legitimisation of the emperor.

A successful transcription meant both glory and a royal reward. Abū l-Faḍl died with a *manṣab-dār* rank of 5000, while ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Lāhaurī and Muḥammad Vāriṭ received large sums from Šāh Jahān. For his *Ma’āṭir-i Raḥīmī* (written until 1616), ‘Abd al-Qādir Nihāvandī (died probably after 1637) was granted a benefice (*jāgīr*) by ‘Abd ar-Raḥīm Ḥān-i Ḥānān (died 1627). Muḥammad Kāẓim, in his ten years as a court chronicler, was granted a fief by Aurangzīb. However, in a step that Kāẓim completely did not expect, Aurangzīb changed his

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<sup>107</sup> The *‘arz-i mukarrar* was the person who handed the emperor the scriptural promotion to sign it and to make it official, after the emperor had just pronounced it some time before; see Ebba Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology. Collected Essays*, New Delhi, 2001, 132.

<sup>108</sup> Conermann, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*, 106-109.

mind around 1670<sup>109</sup> and rejected the work, although the chronicler had already written more than a 1,000 pages covering the first ten years of Aurangzīb's reign. Although this experience must have meant enormous frustration, we will see later that his efforts were by no means in vain, since they greatly influenced the first section of our author's work. Equally, Kāzim still held a well-paid position in the Mughal administration. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Lāhaurī was also subsidised by Aurangzīb throughout his entire life. However, no one else could count on such regard from the emperor, as the fates of 'Abd al-Ḥāziq Ḥuṣṣāl, Mīrzā Jalāl ad-Dīn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, and Muḥammad Kāzim show: the danger of being suddenly cast out of court by the *Pādšāh* remained real.<sup>110</sup>

Unfortunately, we lack sufficient evidence within the sources about chroniclers' individual motivations when they started their work as *amīr-i aḥbār*s or why they wrote in a particular way. Neither Īsar-Dās Nāgar (died 1691) nor Ḥāfi Ḥān (died around 1731-2), who both primarily acted on the political stage, solely focused on the legitimisation of their employee's rule within their writings: one presented a chronicle about Aurangzīb while the other created a panorama of the Muslim presence in South Asia until 1731. Īsar hoped to progress even further in his career and to finally enter the central court, while Ḥāfi Ḥān probably started his work because of intensive contacts with the historian Šāh Navāz Ḥān (died 1758). Although we cannot say very much about the historians' individual motivations, we can at least conclude that no Mughal historian wrote solely to line his own pockets. The most prominent exception is here 'Abd al-Qādir Badā'ūnī (died 1597-8) and his *Muntaḥab at-ta'vārīḥ* (a chronicle from Sebüktegin to the fortieth year of Akbar's rule that was finished in 1597-8).

As the years passed, Badā'ūnī became increasingly sceptical and dissatisfied with Akbar's religious experiment, the *dīn-i l-lāhi*, and wrote a sort of counter-history to this official ideology, which was pushed forward by his prominent opponent Abū l-Faẓl.

However, a Mughal chronicler could also function as a patron of the Islamic arts alongside his official work as an *amīr-i aḥbār*. This can be seen in the life of Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān (died in 1685).<sup>111</sup> As well as writing his *Mir'āt al-'ālam* (finished in 1667), in which he embedded Aurangzīb's reign into a universal historical context, he additionally made his mark as a client and patron of the Islamic arts, building a city quarter (*Baḥtāvernagar*), three mosques, two gardens, and a mausoleum. While pursuing his career, he introduced to the

<sup>109</sup> Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, II.

<sup>110</sup> Conermann, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*, 132.

<sup>111</sup> We will discuss his fate and influence on our author's work in more detail in the third part of this chapter.

court our author Muḥammad Sāqī Musta‘idd Ḥān (died 1724), who supported him in his work as an accountant (*divān*) and secretary (*munṣī*). I will come back to Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān in more detail below, as he was certainly the most important factor in the early stages of Musta‘idd Ḥān’s career.<sup>112</sup>

The memoirists during Akbar’s reign must be briefly mentioned, as they form a specific exception. Gūl-Badan Bīgum (died in 1603),<sup>113</sup> Bāyazīd Bayāt (died after 1591-2), Jauhar Āftābchī (died after 1586-7), and ‘Abbās Ḥān Sarvānī (died after 1586) did not work as historians for Akbar until they were directly ordered to write down their experiences with his predecessors. In their works, they presented their chief heroes (Gūl-Badan Bīgum = Bābur und Humāyūn; Bāyazīd Bayāt and Jauhar = Humāyūn; ‘Abbās Ḥān Sarvānī = Šīr Šāh) as ideal persons, but by no means achieved the same aesthetic style as their professional colleagues. In addition to this, while the reader may be able to find a certain degree of objectivity in their works, the fact remains that their presentation is unmistakably subjective.

It can be concluded that neither an official court chronicler nor a chronicler who worked on his own account needed to have a typical biography at the beginning of their careers as Mughal historians; the preconditions, motives, and qualifications for such a ‘profession’ or ‘hobby’ differed on a case-by-case basis. This is especially true for our author, Musta‘idd Ḥān; despite never gaining the official title of *amīr-i aḥbār*, he nevertheless started on the official complete history of Aurangzīb *Ālamgī* as a *munṣī*.<sup>114</sup> In doing so, he brought with him the new collective self-confidence that had emerged among those holding this rank.

#### MUSTA‘IDD ḤĀN’S MILIEU. THE NEW COLLECTIVE SELF-CONFIDENCE OF THE MUNŠĪS.

Over the course of several decades, Mughal secretaries, *munṣīs*, developed a new form of collective self-consciousness:

In the seventeenth century a number a number of middling groups thus availed themselves of the new cultural horizon that the Mughal state presented, developing a mode of engagement with it through the category of *munshī*. By the late seventeenth century, many of these newly

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<sup>112</sup> Conermann, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*, 133.

<sup>113</sup> Beveridge, *The History of Humāyūn*.

<sup>114</sup> Conermann, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*, 399-406.

arrived scribes and intellectuals were feeling sufficiently confident of their position to propose changes in received models of history-writing and new framings for old histories.<sup>115</sup>

Working in such a prestigious field, they became more and more aware that they were the basis and managers of an exemplary Mughal administration: it was an administration that had made the empire one of the richest and most powerful state formations of the early modern period.

(...) Some authors have sought to find a substantial middle or professional class among such groups as doctors and surgeons, calligraphers, architects, and above all scribes and service people. Moreover, it would seem that these groups in fact grew in importance as the Mughal Empire consolidated itself, and may even have claimed an increasing share in its resources. Some would thus say that the eighteenth century was arguably the century of the scribe in South Asian Century (...) In this century, they came - more or less everywhere in the subcontinent - to take a truly protean quality, to use their scribal profession as a point of departure to embark on the conquest of a number of new horizons.<sup>116</sup>

We can also consider the words of Projit Mukharji, who refers to the important works of Muzaffar Alam in this field:

Their training was largely secular - and specifically secularized through educational reforms under Emperor Akbar. 'An ecumenical learning and religious pluralism' accompanied by a 'self-confident Indian claim to the use of the Persian language' had come to mark their identity.<sup>117</sup>

To a large extent, the life and work of the *munshīs* symbolise the successful cultural symbiosis between Muslims and Hindus under the Mughals. We might call this a 'composite culture', as Alam and Subrahmanyam argue: 'The term "composite culture" has been much used and abused in recent years, but arguably one can find it in the life and education of such a *munshī*.'<sup>118</sup> In this sense, Hindu *munshīs* perfectly appropriated the language, styles, and techniques preferred by their Muslim rulers and eventually supplied the vast majority of the officials in the well-trained Mughal bureaucracy.

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<sup>115</sup> Alam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 427.

<sup>116</sup> Idem, 397; also Iqtidar Alam Khan, *The Middle Classes in the Mughal Empire. Presidential Address. Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Medieval Section*, New Delhi, 1976. Also Zahir Malik, 'The Core and the Periphery. A Contribution to the Debate on the Eighteenth Century' in *Social Scientist*, vol. 18, no. 11-12, 1990, 3-35; Stephen Blake, *Shahjahanabad. The Sovereign City in Mughal India 1639-1739*, Cambridge, 1991, 130-140.

<sup>117</sup> Projit Mukharji, *Nationalizing the Body. The Medical Market, Print and Daktari Medicine*, London, 2011, 38.

<sup>118</sup> Alam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 327.

Men of the pen mastered Persian, the language at the court, and during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries produced works of history, poetry and literature. Chandra Bhan Brahman, Anand Ram Mukhlis, and Sujan Rai are good examples of Hindu ‘men of the pen’ as writers of Persian. These men adopted Muslim dress and learned the etiquette of the court ceremonial. In their domestic arrangements they followed the pattern of the Mughal amirs. They were less observant of ritual than other Hindus and somewhat less conscious of caste. They had the resources to build beautiful homes and to patronize talented artists and skilled artisans.<sup>119</sup>

Teachers such like the celebrated *munšī* Čandar-bhān Brahman became the model for the rising Hindu *munšīs* in the seventeenth century and partially replaced the hitherto unchallenged star of the scene, Abū l-Faẓl, as the first point of reference.<sup>120</sup> ‘The late-seventeenth-century *munšī*’s life and education [TK: exactly at the same time that our author was trained as a *munšī*] was an embodiment of “*composite culture*” in its most literal sense.’<sup>121</sup> Rajeev Kinra, in his recently published study about the Indo-Persian state secretary, characterises the *munšīs* as the ‘(...) cosmopolitan Indo-Persian intelligentsia’<sup>122</sup> and their milieu as a ‘cosmopolitan Persianate ecumene’.<sup>123</sup>

In the long term, the rise of this new social class also questioned the nobility’s omnipotence. An increasing number of intellectuals argued that prestige came not only from birth and martial skill, but also from specific skills, honed to perfection over the years, and intellectual qualities.

Indeed, in his [Čandar-bhān’s] view attributes like high birth and martial valour, while certainly important, were not nearly enough to make someone a great leader, much less a great *wazīr*. Rather, having a knack for skills like calligraphy, managing accounts and drafting elegant letters augmented one’s competence as a manager, while possessing the correct balance of diplomacy, discretion, religious tolerance, mystical sensibility and *akhlaqi* civility was what separated the truly great Mughal ministers like Rājā Todar Mal, Abū al-Faẓl, Afzal Khān, Sa’d Allāh Khān and Raghūnāth Rāy-i Rāyān from others whom he saw, as it were, ‘merely’ as great military commanders like Mīr Jumla or taskmasters like Islām Khān.<sup>124</sup>

By the time Musta‘idd Ḥān sat down to begin his first solo project in 1707, his milieu had thus already reached an important stage in attaining collective self-consciousness. As a

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<sup>119</sup> Blake, *Shajahanabad*, 133.

<sup>120</sup> In detail Rajeev Kinra, ‘Master and Munshī. A Brahman Secretary’s Guide to Mughal Governance’ in *Indian Economic Social History Review*, 47, 4 (2010), 527-61.

<sup>121</sup> Mukharjee, *Nationalizing the Body*, 40.

<sup>122</sup> Kinra, *Writing Self*, 117.

<sup>123</sup> Idem, 269.

<sup>124</sup> Kinra, *Master and Munshī*, 531.

respected *munshī* and chronicler, he therefore could feel relatively free to express his own views and interpretations of the past actions of Aurangzīb, as mentioned above. Our author began his work at a time and in the midst of a public that should be compared to the European *republique des lettres*. This has been described repeatedly as unique in world history, containing as it did a public to which the classical warrior nobility had less and less access:

Figures like Sujān Rai and Chaturman point to the growing presence of groups, which had been acculturated into the Indo-Persian ‘*republic of letters*’ in the course of the Mughal rule, and were conspicuous in the production of historiography.<sup>125</sup>

Let us bear in mind that Musta‘idd Ḥān was a Muslim member of this exclusively Indo-Persian republic of letters; nonetheless, many Hindu scholars had impressive careers within this network. Therefore, his horizons were not limited to a select group of elite Muslims. Rather, we can assume with great certainty that Musta‘idd Ḥān, especially in private, had to listen to criticism from his Hindu colleagues and friends on the unpopular religious and cultural choices of Aurangzīb. Rajeew Kinra rightly points out that previous analyses of Mughal writers mostly ignore the influence of private relationships on their work:

The Mughal Empire is often depicted in such fabulous terms that one might easily forget that there were actual people who lived there, forming friendships, working bureaucratic jobs, mourning lost loved ones, drinking too much, having existential crisis and so on.<sup>126</sup>

If we consider all of this (the growth of the collective self-consciousness in the author’s milieu and the erupting crisis in the empire after Aurangzīb’s death), we can legitimately assume that our author began his work under completely different conditions than those that Muḥammad Kāzīm and his influential patron Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān had experienced nearly 50 years before when Aurangzīb still corrected and banned their texts. In the period during which our author worked, the new military and political authorities were simply too busy with the suppression of numerous rebellions to deal with each page of Musta‘idd Ḥān’s emerging work. We can state, therefore, that our author had a certain degree of freedom to represent his own critical view of the past, despite all the literary and social conventions he still had to fulfil and all the obstacles he had to face. The author’s specific new confidence becomes obvious in a striking anecdote from the eleventh chapter, which I will analyse at the end of this chapter.

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<sup>125</sup> Alam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 411, see also Muzaffar Alam, ‘The Culture and Politics of Persian in Pre-Colonial Hindustan’ in Sheldon Pollock (ed.), *Literary Cultures in History, Reconstruction from South Asia*, Berkeley, 2003.

<sup>126</sup> Kinra, *Master and Munshī*, 529.



Now that we are familiar with some of the important scholarly personalities that had an impact on our author's life and writing (either directly in the person of his foster father Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Hān or indirectly in the person of Muḥammad Kāẓim, whose writing strongly influenced the first ten years of Musta'idd Hān's chronicle), I will turn to the life and career of our author.

#### MUSTA'IDD HĀN'S CAREER AND HIS DEAL WITH AURANGZĪB'S HAWKS

Musta'idd Hān was born around 1650 in Aḥmadnagar.<sup>127</sup> In the early stages of his childhood, he was brought up and educated by his foster father Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Hān, the later author of the *Mir'āt al-ālam* (*The Mirror of the World*). In the same year as Baḥtāvar Hān's death in 1685, Musta'idd Hān became the overseer (*mušrif*) of the royal workshops (*naqqāš-hāna*) and the royal carpet weaving (*jā-namāz-hāna*). Just a year later, he was employed as a writer (*vāqi'-nigār*); finally, he gained an appointment as the guardian of the royal private treasury (*ḥavāṣṣān*). Soon after, in 1701, he was appointed as the head of the royal gifts, a post which occupied a crucial role in early modern court culture.<sup>128</sup> We can be quite sure that he favoured this office in particular and took his duties very serious, since the gift ceremonies in his *Ma'āṣir-i Ālamgīrī* possess a remarkably prominent place and play a crucial role for his narrative strategy. After Aurangzīb passed away in 1707, Musta'idd Hān's career started to progress, as he began working as a secretary for the powerful 'Ināyat Allāh Hān b. Mīrzā Šukr (died 1726), who had once been a senior advisor of Aurangzīb. At the end of his career, our author was even nominated as the new emperor's *wazīr*. Musta'idd Hān died in 1724 in Delhi.<sup>129</sup>

We now have to deal more with Ināyat Allāh Hān's biography, as he played a decisive role in the second phase of Musta'idd Hān's career. From 1702 onwards, 'Ināyat Allāh Hān was Aurangzīb's official *munšī* and took part in the most government important meetings, such as the *diwān-i ḥās*, by acting as the ruler's official representative in some ceremonies.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> The most detailed description of his career can be found in Conermann, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*, 399-406; see also Sajida Alvi, 'Muḥammad Bakhtawar Hān (died 1685) an Historian of Mughal Emperor Awrangzeb' in, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, New York, 1988, vol. 3, 541-42, as well as Elliot, *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, 181-197.

<sup>128</sup> Linda Karamanoff, et. al. (eds.), *The Arts of Giving at Islamic Courts*, Los Angeles, 2011. See also Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters. Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia*, Cambridge, Mass., 2012.

<sup>129</sup> Conermann, *Historiographie*, 399.

<sup>130</sup> 'Ināyat Allāh Hān, *Kalimāt-i ṭaiyibāt*, Persian ed. Muhammad Azizuddin Husain, New Delhi, 1982, 8. Regarding the author, see also idem, 'Inayatullah Khan Kashmir. A Biographical Study' in *Studies in Islam. Quarterly Journal of the Indian Institute of Islamic Studies*, vol. 18, New Delhi, 1981, 9-19.

Although we lack more information about the biography of this ‘celebrated *munšī*’,<sup>131</sup> contemporary witnesses and modern researchers agree that Ḥān enjoyed Aurangzīb’s highest confidence.<sup>132</sup> We also know that he belonged to the hawks in Aurangzīb’s government, a crucial fact when it comes to understanding the structure of the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*.<sup>133</sup> ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān, as Satis Chandra argues, was a ‘blind admirer of Aurangzīb’,<sup>134</sup> supporting a strictly orthodox way of governing. He was responsible for the most unpopular decision Aurangzīb ever made: ‘at ‘Ināyat-Allāh’s recommendation, the emperor ordered the reimposition of *Jizya* on the Hindūs, which had previously been abolished, so as to ensure the support of the orthodox Sunnīs’.<sup>135</sup>

From 1707 onwards, Ḥān continued his already impressive career in the reign of Šāh ‘Alam Bahādūr (gov. 1707-1712)<sup>136</sup> and then successfully expanded it under the latter’s two successors, Farruḥ Siyar (gov. 1712-1719) and Muḥammad Šāh (gov. 1719-1748). On top of this, he wrote the important speech collections *Aḥkām-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, *Kalimāt-i ṭayyibāt* and the *Kalimāt-i Aurangzīb*; as luck would have it, Musta‘idd Ḥān’s new supervisor, just like his former mentor Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān, was intimately familiar with literary and historical works as well as being a highly respected and successful courtier.

After Aurangzīb’s death in 1707, it was ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān who opposed Aurangzīb’s previous decision to abolish the office of court chronicler. Rather, he argued, it was the due of a Mughal emperor to have a chronicle reporting his heroic deeds. Musta‘idd Ḥān tells us this at the beginning of the second part of the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* by relating his interview with his prospective patron. He resisted his offer, but ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān relentlessly beset the hesitant Musta‘idd Ḥān with exhortations to accept this important task. Thus, the new author, despite some concerns, started the work; after three years of writing, he finally finished the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* (*The Heroic Deeds of (Aurangzīb) ‘Ālamgīrī*). However, during these years, ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān was not satisfied with the role of passive patron of Aurangzīb’s chronicle. While Musta‘idd Ḥān, through his decades of work within the multicultural environment of the *munšīs*, certainly had his own opinion about Aurangzīb’s government and wanted to exercise

<sup>131</sup> Idem, *Kalimat-i-Taiyibat*, 1.

<sup>132</sup> On the author’s career, see in detail Ibid., *Introduction*.

<sup>133</sup> Idem, *Structure of Politics under Aurangzeb*, 127. For a discussion on this delicate issue, see: Shireen Moosvi, *People, Taxation, and Trade in Mughal India*, New Delhi, 2008, 103 f.

<sup>134</sup> Satis Chandra, *Essays on Medieval Indian History*, New Delhi, 2003, 349.

<sup>135</sup> Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Shāh Walī-Allāh and his Times. A Study of Eighteenth Century Islam, Politics and Society in India*, Canberra, 1980, 128. Azizuddin Husain also ascribes the reimposition of the *Jizya* to ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān, see also Husain, *Structure of Politics under Aurangzeb*, 127.

<sup>136</sup> Šāh ‘Alam Bahādūr’s first steps as the new emperor will be discussed below in section 2, part 4.

criticism, at least indirectly, 'Ināyat Allāh Ḥān, Aurangzīb's former hawk, wanted the exact opposite. As we shall see, this patron sometimes considerably influenced the design of Musta'idd Ḥān's text: he wanted the destruction of the temples to be seen as one of Aurangzīb's major feats. All these aspects had an immense influence on the text's multilayeredness, which I will discuss in the following section.

## SECTION 2: THE TEXT

*It would be, to my mind, a fundamental error to subject a chronicle like Abū l-Fazl's Akbar Nāma to analysis under the same rules as one uses to analyse the travelogue of Evliya Çelebi. The Authors in the two cases were aiming at quite different ends and, as historians, we should give due weight to their intentions, even if we wish to see them as motivated by prejudices, ideological baggage, and so on. -*

Sanjay Subrahmanyam.<sup>137</sup>

### PRELUDE

The chronicle's first ten chapters report on the first decade of Aurangzīb's rule. Here, the author explicitly emphasises that he was referencing Muḥammad Kāẓim's 1,000-page *ʿĀlamgīr-nāma*.<sup>138</sup> While this work had been previously rejected by Aurangzīb, the author obviously had no problem with taking this 'banned' version as his first point of reference for the period between 1658 and 1668. The second, much larger part of the text (which covers the years 1669 to 1707) was written solely by Mustaʿidd Ḥān himself, based on his own recollections and those of important witnesses.<sup>139</sup> However, Sajida Alvi and Stephan Conermann argue convincingly that he did in fact refer to the *Mirʿāt al-ʿālam* of his famous foster father Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān, a matter we will discuss shortly.<sup>140</sup>

Although Mustaʿidd Ḥān had not received the order to complete a new chronicle from the highest level, since Aurangzīb's successor Šāh ʿĀlam Bahādur (reigned 1707-1712) maintained his predecessor's decision and did not reinstate the office of the court chronicler, he was nevertheless able to carry out his work freely and had access to all the archives and witnesses.<sup>141</sup> The result is an almost 500-page-long text that fully possesses the characteristics of a classic Mughal chronicle.<sup>142</sup> The 51 chapters correspond with the years of Aurangzīb's reign, beginning with the outbreak of fratricidal war in 1658 and ending with the death of the protagonist in 1707.

Šāh ʿĀlam Bahādur's tacit acquiescence to the ongoing work should, in my opinion, be seen as tantamount to an acceptance of Mustaʿidd and Ināyat Allāh Ḥān's project, since the new ruler could have simply prohibited the chronicler's efforts at any time if he had wanted to, just as his predecessor had done before him in the tragic case of Muḥammad Kāẓim's *ʿĀlamgīr-*

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<sup>137</sup> Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Explorations in Connected History. From the Tagus to the Ganges*, New Delhi, 2005, 29.

<sup>138</sup> Mustaʿidd Ḥān, *Maʿāṣir-i ʿĀlamgīrī*, 40.

<sup>139</sup> Both works and its authors are discussed in detail in the following part 1.

<sup>140</sup> Alvi, *The Historians of Awrangzeb*, 70; Conermann, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*, 402.

<sup>141</sup> Mustaʿidd Ḥān, *Maʿāṣir-i ʿĀlamgīrī*, 69.

<sup>142</sup> Conermann, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*, 402.

*nāma*. Given that the real initiator of this project was the influential ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān, one of Aurangzīb’s former key ministers now actively expanding his career under the new ruler, Musta‘idd Ḥān’s historiographical activities certainly could not have remained a secret at court. Rather, it must have been of great interest for the new ruler to see exactly how his intellectual elite and closest advisories would design the official version of his father’s history and how exactly they would interpret it. Would they submit a text whose sole aim was to pay homage to his father and in which the authors, therefore, would support Aurangzīb’s supposed religious orthodoxy? Or would the text function as a mirror for Bahādur’s own government, thus serving as a warning about his own decisions by criticising Aurangzīb?

It is in terms of this specific time of origin that the text’s complexity becomes apparent. In the first two parts of the next section, I will present the textual documents and the authors Musta‘idd Ḥān often referred to within his writing process. In the third part, I will portray the protagonist’s permanent state of emergency, which had a considerable influence on the text’s genesis and structure, as well as the author’s setting in life (*Sitz im Leben*). The term ‘*Sitz im Leben*’ can be traced back to the German Protestant theologian Hermann Gunkel (died 1932), the founder of the religious-historical school. Today, it is also used outside of theological research in order to examine the sociological aspects of a text.<sup>143</sup> Within the fourth and fifth parts, I will come back to these important aspects, and show that Musta‘idd Ḥān’s *Sitz im Leben* was indeed a very complicated one for the work of a chronicler. Here, I would like to make two proposals for the further categorisation of the text. Firstly, the text can be regarded as the author’s career ticket and, secondly, based on this argument, it should be interpreted as a hidden agenda 1710 for the shaky start of Šāh Bahādur’s new reign.

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<sup>143</sup> See e.g. Kenneth Newport, *The Sources and Sitz im Leben of Matthew 23*, Sheffield, 1995; Marko Marttila, *Collective Reinterpretation in the Psalms. A Study of the Redaction History of the Psalter*, Tübingen, 2006, 67-83; Ulrich Heckel, *Der Segen im Neuen Testament. Begriff, Formeln, Gesten*, Tübingen, 2002, 19f.

## ON THE *MA'ĀSİR-I 'ĀLAMGĪRĪ*'S DICHOTOMY, PART 1: THE TEXT'S TWO PARTS

### THE BASIS FOR THE FIRST PART OF THE *MA'ĀSİR-I 'ĀLAMGĪRĪ*: MUḤAMMAD KĀZIM'S (died 1679) *'ĀLAMGĪR-NĀMA*<sup>144</sup>

Muḥammad Kāzim began his career at Aurangzīb's court as a secretary (*munšī*)<sup>145</sup> after his father Muḥammad Amīn (died unknown) already had had the honour of writing the history of the first ten years of the reign of Aurangzīb's father, Šāh Jahān (reigned 1627-1658), in his *Pādšā-nāmāh*. A couple of years later, the recently crowned Aurangzīb became aware of Kāzim's talents and ordered him to report all the important events during his reign. Kāzim had access to all the archives of the kingdom: the only condition the ruler imposed was that the newly appointed official chronicler would regularly read to him from his text so he could insert possible corrections. By using his right of censorship, it can be argued that Aurangzīb acted as a co-author of the *'Ālamgīr-nāma*.<sup>146</sup>

However, this collaboration ended in a surprising way. After Kāzim had completed the first ten years and had given his 1,000-page-long account a title (*'Ālamgīr-nāma* = *The Book of the World Conqueror*, with each of the ten years corresponding to a chapter about 100 pages in length), Aurangzīb abolished the traditional office of the court chronicler in the eleventh year of his reign (1668/1669) and dismissed Kāzim's chronicle.<sup>147</sup> This year is generally considered a turning point in Aurangzīb's reign, as he now pursued a decidedly orthodox path and began to align himself with concepts from the *Šarī'a*. However, the reasons why the office of court chronicler was closed still remain controversial within the research: explanations swing from a need to make savings to religious and cultural reasons.<sup>148</sup> The classical interpretations (provided by, for example, John Richards, Eliot Dawson, and Jadunath Sarkar) overlook the fact that Aurangzīb expressly allowed the publication of Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān's *Mir'āt al-'ālam* after the author passed away in 1685: it is therefore premature to argue about a

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<sup>144</sup> Muḥammad Kāzim, *'Ālamgīr-nāma*, Persian edition by Maulawī Ḥadīm Ḥusain / 'Abd al-Ḥayy, 2 vols. Calcutta, 1865-1873. Parts have been translated by Elliot, *The History of India as told by its own Historians* in vol. 7, e.g. 178.

<sup>145</sup> The most detailed study is Kinra's *Writing Self, Writing Empire*; see also Alam, *The Making of a Munšī*; Muzaffar Alam, Françoise Delvoye, and Marc Gaborieau (eds.), *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture. Indian and French Studies*, New Delhi, 2000; Muzaffar Alam, *The Culture and Politics of Persian in Pre-Colonial Hindustan*; idem. And Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Witnesses and Agents of Empire. Eighteenth-Century Historiography and the World of the Mughal Munshī' in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 53, no. 1-2, 2010, 393-423; Rajeev Kinra, 'Master and Munshī. A Brahman Secretary's Guide to Mughal Governance' in *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. 47, no. 4, 2010, 527-61.

<sup>146</sup> Elliot, *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, 175.

<sup>147</sup> Mustai'dd Ḥān, *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 67-68; see also Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, 173.

<sup>148</sup> Alvi, *The Historians of Awrangzeb*, 57.

complete ban on official historiography from the eleventh year of Aurangzīb's reign onwards.<sup>149</sup> Indeed, Azizuddin Husain argues that Aurangzīb actually never 'banned' the writing of history:

(...) Aurangzīb's reign is the richest period from the point of view of the number of histories. Bakhtawar Ḥān, Sadiq Ḥān, Khafī Ḥān, Bhim Sen, Ishwar Das Nagar, Aqil Ḥān and other wrote histories and all of them also held official positions. J. N. Sarkar attributed it to the financial crisis. But Aurangzīb spent a huge amount on the compilation of *Fatawa-i Alamgiri* and rupees seven lacs on the preservation of the manuscripts in the Mughal royal library. So, financial stringency is not acceptable as a reason.<sup>150</sup>

This being said, we can still assume that the unexpected rejection of Muḥammad Kāzim by his powerful patron represented a major setback. However, surprisingly enough, he still remained closely associated with the Royal Secretariat (*dār al-inšā'*) and even became the superintendent of the sales pavilions (*dāgūga-y-i ibtiyā' ḥānah*). It is therefore difficult to see his dismissal as a punishment on the part of the ruler against either Kāzim's profession or his milieu. Rather, as I argue, it is clear that Aurangzīb had no desire to sever his link to Muḥammad Kāzim and his well-known family, which gave birth to two respected scholars and intellectuals (Muḥammad Kāzim himself and his father Muḥammad Amīn); instead, it is more likely that the ruler preferred that he take care of other important tasks.

Despite his dismissal as the official court chronicler, Muḥammad Kāzim's death in 1679 in Delhi was a significant turning point for the intellectual, cultural, and political life of Mughal India, as he was one of the last chroniclers who had been directly appointed to this highly respected office by a Mughal emperor. The importance of Kāzim's work and intellectual life is further clarified by the fact that his text would later serve as the main point of reference for the first ten years of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, which he, sadly enough, did not get to witness. His outstanding reputation was expressly emphasised by our author in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, where he, on several occasions,<sup>151</sup> praises Muḥammad Kāzim and his detailed descriptions, advising the reader to read the *'Ālamgīr-nāma* as well as his own text. The *'Ālamgīr-nāma*, therefore, is the basis for the first ten years of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*.

We will now turn to the influential Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān, a close aide of Aurangzīb who, through his patronage activities and interest in historiography, played a decisive role in the life of Musta'idd Ḥān and the formation of the second part of the text.

<sup>149</sup> See also Brown, *Did Aurangzeb ban Music*, 101.

<sup>150</sup> Husain, *Aurangzeb and the Court Historian*, 15.

<sup>151</sup> Mustai'dd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 40, 67-68.

THE BASIS FOR THE SECOND PART OF THE *MA'ĀSİR-I 'ĀLAMGĪRĪ*:  
MUḤAMMAD BAḤTĀVAR ḤĀN'S *MIR'ĀT AL-'ĀLAM* (THE MIRROR OF THE  
WORLD).

After Muḥammad Kāzīm's *'Ālamgīr-nāma* was rejected around 1670, the future author of the *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī* was still a teenager and at this point was certainly not aware that it would be left to him to complete the work of the prestigious Muḥammad Kāzīm. In order to achieve this goal, one person in particular was of crucial importance within Musta'idd Ḥān's life; namely, Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān.

This influential Ḥān already had access to the emperor's inner circle from the very beginning of his career. At Aurangzīb's accession in May 1659, he was in charge of the royal fan; in August of the same year, he was awarded with the title of *Ḥān*. Subsequently, he was appointed in the ninth year of Aurangzīb's reign (1666-67) to the *manṣab* ranking of 1,150.<sup>152</sup> In 1669, he was promoted to be the superintendent of the office of the royal slaves (*dāgūga-yi ḥavāṣṣān*). After his *manṣab* was increased once again, Baḥtāvar Ḥān was employed with the task of conveying important royal decrees and messages to different places in the empire, a position that put him in direct contact with the governor of Kābul. He remained one of Aurangzīb's closest and most influential eunuchs until his death in 1685, accompanying the latter from his time as prince until deep into the crisis years of the 1680s.<sup>153</sup>

Once our author Musta'idd Ḥān was finally old enough to work for his prominent patron, he entered into his service as his *munṣī* and tax administrator (*dīvān*). However, these tasks were apparently not enough for the young and ambitious Musta'idd Ḥān, since he also helped his foster father compile his historical treatises, namely the aforementioned *Mir'āt al-'ālam*, until Baḥtāvar Ḥān's death in 1685.<sup>154</sup> The latter had begun his work on this eminent text immediately after Aurangzīb gained power in 1658; after a few years, Musta'idd Ḥān began to help as old age overtook him. The *Mir'āt al-'ālam* is divided into seven chapters and smaller sub-sections. The authors distinguished the former from the latter by entitling each of the main chapters *Ārā'is̄* (ornaments).<sup>155</sup>

The fact that Aurangzīb permitted Musta'idd Ḥān to publish the *Mir'āt al-'ālam* after the death of Baḥtāvar Ḥān in 1685 shows that the ruler certainly favoured the text. It also meant

<sup>152</sup> On the *manṣab*-system see in detail Stephan Conermann, *Das Mogulreich. Geschichte und Kultur des muslimischen Indien*, Munich, 2006, 49 f.

<sup>153</sup> Alvi, *Muḥammad Bakhtawar Ḥān*, 541-42.

<sup>154</sup> Idem, *Muḥammad Bakhtawar Ḥān*.

<sup>155</sup> See in detail idem, *The Historians of Awrangzeb*.



that he himself believed that his method of rule was reproduced here in the most correct manner. In this context, Athar Abbas Rizvi argues, in my opinion very convincingly, that the *Mir'āt al-ālam* may have been composed by Aurangzīb himself.<sup>156</sup> Although this cannot be definitively proven, at least we can say that Aurangzīb obviously did identify himself with this historical treatise, a fact which will become crucial when we come to discuss the (alleged) ban on music and the author's art of compilation in chapter 5.

However, it is important to note that Musta'idd Ḥān failed to mention that he also relied on his former mentor's *Mir'āt al-ālam* for the second, much longer part of his *Ma'āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*. At first glance, this surprises the reader, since he explicitly refers to the *Ālamgīr-nāma* as the basis for the first part of the text. The author's silence on this point is the reason why Sajida Alvi condemned him as a plagiarist, since he did not mention his sources properly.<sup>157</sup> However, I argue that Alvi overlooks the fact that Musta'idd Ḥān, through his many years of successful cooperation with Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān, might have seen himself legitimately as the co-author of the *Mir'āt al-ālam*, especially in respect to his corrections to the text and its publication after Baḥtāvar Ḥān's death. Furthermore, there was no need for Musta'idd Ḥān to conceal that his *Ma'āṣir-i Ālamgīrī* clearly corresponded to the basic statements in the *Mir'āt al-ālam*, as the previous collaboration between the two authors at the court had probably not been a secret; indeed, his publication of his former patron's work and his help as a co-author after 1685 were well known. This was an achievement of which Musta'idd Ḥān must have been particularly proud, because neither Muḥammad Kāẓim nor Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān had managed to convince Aurangzīb in their lifetimes of the need for a chronicle, a task that our author managed on his own after 1685.

Aurangzīb's posthumous adoption of Musta'idd and Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān's composite work after 1685 was yet another decisive impetus for Musta'idd Ḥān's career at court. It surely strengthened his will to pen historical works, as well as his self-confidence as a writer and intellectual. Compared to the fate that Muḥammad Kāẓim had to experience with the prohibition of his *Ālamgīr-nāma*, which Musta'idd Ḥān had personally witnessed, the publication of the *Mir'āt al-ālam* was an important signal for our future chronicler, as it clearly showed that Mughal historiography was not over yet. Indeed, Aurangzīb's sanction of the *Mir'āt al-ālam* might have served our author as yet another motivation to continue

<sup>156</sup> Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A Socio-intellectual history of the Isna 'Ashari Shi'is in India (Sixteenth to Nineteenth century AD)*, New Delhi, 1986, 275-277; siehe auch Brown, *Did Aurangzeb Ban Music*, 101.

<sup>157</sup> Alvi, *The Historians of Awrangzeb*, 70.

dealing with this branch of the discipline. We can only speculate, but it seems fairly plausible that Musta‘idd Ḥān never gave up on the idea of writing a complete chronicle by himself after 1685.

This goal, however, turned out to be quite a complicated one, as Musta‘idd Ḥān was faced with the difficult task of finding the right balance between praising Aurangzīb’s deeds and criticising the latter’s decisions regarding non-Muslim communities and their institutions.

#### ON THE *MA’ĀSIR-I ‘ĀLAMGĪRĪ*’S DICHOTOMY, PART 2: ON MUSTA‘IDD ḤĀN’S CONFLICTING DUTIES AS A CHRONICLER.

Once Musta‘idd Ḥān had accepted the job to write the *Ma’āsir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* in 1707, the question still remained as to how he should represent the almost 50-year-long rule of Aurangzīb in a meaningful manner to the latter’s son and the text’s main recipient, Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur.<sup>158</sup> Even though the new emperor remained faithful to some of the practices of his father, he nonetheless distanced himself from crucial elements of his predecessor’s policy that had been met with considerable resistance during Aurangzīb’s lifetime.<sup>159</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān could not stylise Aurangzīb as a flawless and ideal ruler in the classical manner, precisely because the chronicle’s recipient Bahādur had deviated from his progenitor’s politics. However, this tricky situation was nothing new in the history of the Mughal chroniclers. Corinne Lefèvre shows in her study that this was also the case with Mu‘tamad Ḥān’s *Iqbāl-nāma-yi Jahāngīrī* and Kāmgār Ḥusainī’s *Ma’āsir-i Ġahāngīrī*. As both works had been finished shortly after Ġahāngīr’s death, as was the case with the *Ma’āsir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, they were written, *inter alia*, under the premise of pleasing his successor Šāh Ġahān, which explains the partially negative portrayal of Jahāngīr in these two sources.<sup>160</sup>

We should therefore proceed on the assumption that an uncritical glorification of his father was certainly not in the interests of the new ruler, who, after his accession to power in 1707, was directly faced with one of the empire’s biggest crises ever, one that ultimately resulted from his father’s expansionist policy. As Bahādur did not ascend to the throne before the age

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<sup>158</sup> Regarding the analysis of the recipient, see in detail Finner, *Narratologie und biblische Exegese*, 186-243, 393-438. I will discuss this analysis of the recipient more in detail in the third section of the present chapter, where I will present my methodological approach.

<sup>159</sup> See e.g. Robert Hallissey, *The Rajput Rebellion Against Aurangzeb. A Study of the Mughal Empire in Seventeenth-century India*, Columbia, 1977.

<sup>160</sup> Corinne Lefèvre, ‘Recovering a Missing Voice from Mughal India. The Imperial Discourse of Jahāngīr (r. 1605-1627) in His Memoirs’ in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 50, no. 4, 2007, 452-489, 455f.

of 64,<sup>161</sup> nothing would be more confusing for Aurangzīb's descendant than a chronicle that solely reported on an eternally youthful and inviolable Aurangzīb, for whose mistakes he had now had to pay. It would be almost impossible for Bahādur to identify with such a protagonist, let alone consider his erroneous actions from a forgiving perspective.

On the other hand, Musta'idd Ḥān could not consistently condemn Aurangzīb and thus ascribe to him all the blame for the emergent crises in the kingdom. This was because an essential part of the new emperor's legitimacy was based on a direct appeal to the heroic deeds of his predecessor and the glorious Mughal dynasty.<sup>162</sup> In addition, the old orthodox elites were still in power, for example, in the figure of 'Ināyat Allāh Ḥān. The latter identified with Aurangzīb's more problematic decisions (apart from the abolition of the office of the court chronicler) and thus was not interested in seeing his former patron constantly criticised in this new text.

All of this presented a major obstacle to openly and consistently condemning Aurangzīb in an official chronicle right at the beginning of Šāh 'Alam Bahādur's reign, since the author would have been in danger of accusing Aurangzīb's closest entourage and advisors of malpractice. Although we find no direct evidence in the text that shows that 'Ināyat Allāh Ḥān intervened directly in 'Musta'idd Ḥān's chronicle, we should nevertheless assume that the powerful and experienced courtier told our author how he himself envisioned the official version of Aurangzīb's rule. It cannot be doubted that he desired as little criticism as possible, precisely because of Aurangzīb's trust in his skills and their long and fruitful collaboration. Just as Aurangzīb, through his direct intervention in the work of Muḥammad Kāẓim's *Ālamgīr-nāma*, functioned indirectly as part of the authorship of that work, we should therefore identify 'Ināyat Allāh Ḥān as a crucial part of the *Ma'āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*'s multiple authorship as well. This explains the occasionally contradictory sections of the text, such as the dual emphasis on Aurangzīb's *wise* decision to enter an alliance with the Hindus and, on the other hand, the praise for the destruction of a Hindu temple.

However, multiple authorship was nothing extraordinary at that time, as both copyright and declared individual authorship are modern concepts which were not fully established until the eighteenth century. For example, in sixteenth-century Europe, cosmographies were entirely based on multiple authorship. Even if many works appeared under the name of a single

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<sup>161</sup> Faruqi, *Princess of the Mughal Empire*, 312.

<sup>162</sup> In detail Lisa Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in Mughal India. Memory and Dynastic Politics in Early Modern South and Central Asia*, London, 2012.

author, numerous letters addressed to the compiler were put *verbatim* into his writing.<sup>163</sup> The same is true for chronicles.<sup>164</sup> So, although our author certainly had a strong influence on the content and linguistic presentation of the text, we nevertheless should not underestimate ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān’s role.

Finally, Musta‘idd Ḥān’s had limited room to criticise Aurangzīb directly because he himself had pursued a successful career under the deceased ruler. Therefore, the author probably did not primarily perceive his former patron as an obstacle or tyrant, as others definitely did. He had also witnessed that Aurangzīb ruled flexibly and not only narrow-mindedly, as we saw in the posthumous publication of the *Mir’āt al-‘ālam* in 1685. This clearly speaks against the possibility of a *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* in which the author only criticises his former patron. However, why do we still find criticism (partly clear, partly veiled) of Aurangzīb’s decisions and actions in the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*? I suggest that this should be explained via the protagonist’s permanent state of emergency.

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<sup>163</sup> Kaspar Greyerz/a.o. (eds.), *Wissenschaftsgeschichte und Geschichte des Wissens im Dialog - Connecting Science and Knowledge. Schauplätze der Forschung - Scenes of Research*, Göttingen 2013, 22f.

<sup>164</sup> Many important discussions on this topic can be found in Rabasa, *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, 1-24, 148-173, 601, 701f.

ON THE *MA'ĀSIR-I 'ĀLAMGĪRĪ*'S DICHOTOMY, PART 3: THE PROTAGONIST'S  
PERMANENT STATE OF EMERGENCY AND THE MUGHAL PUBLIC SPHERE.

The times could not have been worse for the new chronicler to portray Aurangzīb positively. Already in the 1680s, the empire's problems multiplied, predominantly emerging from a long-deferred structural reform of the *manṣabdār*-system.<sup>165</sup> In these times of crisis, Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Han, Musta'idd Ḥān's former patron, was entrusted with delivering important royal *farmāns* (grants) in the provinces. As we have seen, he was in direct contact with the governor of Kabul,<sup>166</sup> which meant he was directly confronted with the consequences of Aurangzīb's expansionist policy, since the provinces (and thus their governors, his new interlocutors) were badly affected: they consistently had to provide resources to the mobile imperial centre led by Aurangzīb.

The endless wars, especially those in the Deccan, brought the empire to its military and financial limits; over the years, they had had a negative impact on the morale of the army and the imperial administration. The conflicts had to be financed through higher taxation on regions which were previously exempt from high taxes: such a policy led to numerous uprisings among the affected kingdoms and tribes. However, trade with the Mughals and intensifying global commerce allowed more and more regions to become prosperous and self-confident, forming alliances against Aurangzīb and increasingly boycotting tributes. Through targeted bribery, this even had a direct impact on the empire's central administration. All of this was accompanied by disorientation among the empire's elites and scholars; in other words, by an 'intellectual malaise', which was all the more unfortunate given that it happened at the same time when important scientific discoveries were being made in other parts of the world.<sup>167</sup> Finally, the weakening of the princely households, caused by a massive financial crisis at the end of the seventeenth century, negatively affected the traditional war over the

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<sup>165</sup> This short summary of the empire's crisis is based primarily on Faruqi, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire, Introduction*; see also John Richards, 'The Seventeenth-Century Crisis in South Asia' in *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 24, no. 04, 1990, 625-638; idem, *The Mughal Empire*, 225 f., Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India. Power Relations in Western India, c. 1572-1730*, Cambridge, 2004; André Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India. Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth-Century Maratha Svaraja*, Cambridge, 1986; Richard Barnett, *North India between Empires, Awadh, the Mughals, and the British, 1720-1801*, Berkeley, 1980; Karen Leonard, 'The 'Great Firm' Theory of the Decline of the Mughal Empire' in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1979, 151-167; also Robert Travers, 'The Eighteenth Century in Indian History' in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 40, no. 3, 2007, 492-508; Christopher Bayly, *The Imperial Meridian. The British Empire and the World*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London, 1990.

<sup>166</sup> Alvi, *The Historians of Aurangzeb*, 58, Footnote 10.

<sup>167</sup> See Mohammad Athar Ali, 'The Passing of Empire. The Mughal Case' in Mohammad Athar Ali (ed.), *Mughal India. Studies in Polity, Ideas, Society, and Culture*, New Delhi 2006, 337-349. in detail Prasannan Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not. Global Economic Divergence, 1600-1850*, Cambridge, 2011.

succession, which, as was recently argued by Munis Faruqi, had been a crucial causal factor in ultimately stabilising the imperial system.<sup>168</sup>

The symbolic meaning of the Deccan for the history of the Mughals and Aurangzīb is particularly illustrated by the fact that the latter found his final resting place there. Because of the wars in this region, Aurangzīb was forced to permanently pay the growing numbers of soldiers and nobles and to allocate the land promised to them once the campaigns were over. The result was that more and more charges were demanded from farmers, which they simply could not deliver over such a long period. Nor was endless land available: the only way out for many was to start rebellions against the empire.

In addition to these obvious physical burdens on the empire's population, Aurangzīb's unpopular and tactically unwise religious and cultural choices also came into play. These were intended primarily to maintain the bond with powerful orthodox movements. However, in several studies, Richard Eaton has satisfactorily demonstrated that numerous arrangements for the destructions of temples were often not carried out or should rather be seen as the targeted punishment of rebellious non-Muslim nobles and their representative structures. The temple, in the interpretation of the rulers in Delhi, was the property of the Mughal state; thus, its destruction should not essentially be regarded as a religious matter. Rather, the temple destructions were measures of Mughal *Realpolitik*, alongside the building and restoration of Hindu temples at the direct command of Aurangzīb.<sup>169</sup> Munis Faruqi has recently summarised this argument convincingly:

Aurangzīb nevertheless had a complicated relationship with non-Islamic religious traditions, as seen best in his attitudes towards Hindu temples. On the one hand, Aurangzīb occasionally ordered the destruction of Hindu temples, and on the other, he patronised certain temples with cash and land grants.

Furthermore, Aurangzīb is known to have admired publicly the beauty of at least one temple. During his visit in the mid-1660s/1670s to the Ellora temple complex he remarked that, 'it was one of the marvels of the work of the true transcendent Artisan [i.e.] God' (Aurangzīb, *Kalimāt-i ṭaiyibāt*, 13). This ostensibly contradictory behaviour is best explained by more careful attention to which temples were destroyed, where, and when: the targets of imperial destruction were selected following carefully calculated political judgements, based primarily

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<sup>168</sup> Faruqi, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire*, Cambridge, 2012.

<sup>169</sup> See Richard Eaton, *Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim states*, in *Frontline*, vol. 17, Issue 26, Dec. 23, 2000 - Jan. 05, 2001, <http://www.frontline.in/static/html/fl1726/17260700.html>, last accessed 7/17/2015.

on whether they were directly patronized by his defeated brothers, supporters of his brothers, or various political opponents, rather than on Islamic iconoclasm, as has often been assumed.<sup>170</sup>

Equally, Aurangzīb's famous ban on music from 1668, which has been repeatedly used as a prime example of his alleged orthodoxy, was justified by Muslim witnesses as a purely private decision, which ultimately had no effect beyond the walls of the Red Fort.<sup>171</sup>

However, in a time of crisis, the emperor's religious and cultural policies were the final straw, since they angered non-Muslim elites, who now found a further legitimate reason to secede from the imperial centre and to mobilise their supporters.<sup>172</sup> The result was that, once the news of the ruler's death reached the provinces (the very time our author took up his pen to begin his work on the *Ma'āşir-i 'Ālamgīrī*), riots had started in the heart of the empire: Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur found himself confronted with enormous conflicts at the very beginning of his reign.

[In 1707] The empire was in crisis, politically, administratively and financially, and there was little he [Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur] could do. Facing him were problems of neglect owing to the long wars in the Deccan, exacerbated by the Jat and Rajput uprisings. Soon to be added was the rebellion of the Sikhs immediately to the north of the Agra-Delhi axis of Mughal power, while in the Deccan Maratha armies had steadily grown and changed by adopting more advanced weapons and tactics.<sup>173</sup>

Let us remember, once again, that Musta'idd Ḥān's foster father Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Han, at the peak of his career in the 1680s, carried out important diplomatic missions directly ordered by the ruler himself. Once he had left the protected walls of the Red Fort behind him to meet his new political tasks, he was faced with the concrete crises of the country. We thus should confidently assume that the empire's emergency certainly did not remain hidden to Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān or to our author, as both certainly had critical discussions about Aurangzīb's decisions over the years. It seems therefore very likely that the erupting riots of 1707 were not a surprise to our author, given that he had already witnessed the empire's protracted imperial burdens, especially in the wars in the Deccan and the *manṣabdār* crisis in the 1680s.

Although the structures of the state with regard to the mobilisation and recruitment of new troops proved to be very effective and successful for a long time,<sup>174</sup> it was no secret to the

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<sup>170</sup> Faruqi, *Awrangzīb*, 70.

<sup>171</sup> Brown, *Did Aurangzeb ban Music*, 101.

<sup>172</sup> Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*.

<sup>173</sup> Stein, *A History of India*, 182.

<sup>174</sup> For an alternative analysis on the first half of eighteenth-century Mughal India, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam,

Mughal elites that they were witnessing a crisis of enormous proportions from 1707 onwards. Therefore, our author's *Sitz im Leben* could be viewed as the shift from prosperity to crisis. Precisely because he had witnessed a seemingly endless expansion and accumulation of vast wealth and lands for decades in the early stage of his career at the court, he now found himself confronted with the task of writing a chronicle about a ruler who had bequeathed numerous enemies and almost insoluble conflicts to his successor, the main recipient of the book.

In the years of Aurangzīb's reign, criticism of his numerous wars and sometimes unpopular religious decisions among the 'Mughal public' grew louder and louder. However, criticism against Aurangzīb was not only raised in the innermost parts of the Red Fort, nor is it particularly illustrated by the fact that Aurangzīb's successor deviated from his father's decisions in crucial ways. Rather, from the seventeenth century onwards, we witness a broad early-modern Indian public who influenced the politico-cultural sphere in Mughal India: '(...) gossip and anecdotes (...) circulated in the literary salons, coffee houses, and *bāzārs* of the emergent Mughal public sphere (which) became crucial in the construction of collective memories.'<sup>175</sup>

It is highly probable that this did not remain unnoticed by our author, who, with a skilled narrative strategy, still managed to design a text that served both as a career ticket at Šāh 'Alam Bahādur's court and as an agenda 1710 for the new ruler. In this sense, he had to react to the fluctuating policies of his intended recipient, Šāh Bahādur. His often contradictory stances definitely complicated Musta'idd Ḥān's setting in life and largely explain the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*'s dichotomy.

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'Un grand dérangement: Dreaming an Indo-Persian Empire in South Asia, 1740-1800' in *Journal of Early Modern History*, vol. 4, no. 3-4, 2000, 337-378; also Muzaffar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New Delhi, 2013.

<sup>175</sup> Kinra, 'Infantilizing Bābā Dārā', 177.



ON THE *MA'ĀŠIR-I 'ĀLAMGĪRĪ*'S DICHOTOMY, PART 4: THE TEXT AS A *HIDDEN AGENDA 1710* FOR THE NEW EMPEROR

So which position did our author take? Unfortunately, we know nothing about his private life, nor do we have any evidence about his intentions with regard to his own career planning: Conermann has noted this general tendency among the official chroniclers of the Mughal Empire. However, what we do know is that Musta'idd Ḥān's career after the release of his *Ma'āšir-i 'Ālamgīrī* really took off, ending with the important office of *wazīr*. This happy ending certainly would not have come to pass if his text had provoked the indignation of Aurangzīb's successor.

In this sense, I would like to suggest some points in the following two sections that are partly based on the research surrounding the office of the *amīr-i aḥbār* in order to better categorise the text. First, I suggest that the text should be generally understood as a career ticket for Musta'idd Ḥān. Secondly, based on this assumption, I furthermore categorise the text as a *hidden agenda 1710*. It was aimed directly at the new ruler Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur and, upon closer inspection, is filled with indirect instructions to the government.

Of course, the text clearly corresponds to the genre of Indo-Persian chronicles.<sup>176</sup> These documents typically report in a classical manner the monarch's daring exploits by describing him as an infallible Muslim leader. However, within the emperor's official chronicle, our author still expresses, sometimes quite directly, his criticisms of the dead ruler (such could never happened in a chronicle like Abū l-Faẓl's *Akbār-nāma*, in which the protagonist and the recipient are the same person). Therefore, the *Ma'āšir-i 'Ālamgīrī* must also be understood as a fluid text in which Musta'idd Ḥān responded to the current reforms of the new ruler Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur while writing between 1707 and 1712.

When Musta'idd Ḥān started the work on his chronicle upon the accession of the new ruler, it was not at all clear which form of governance Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur would pursue. At the beginning of his reign, Bahadur still stuck to some of Aurangzīb's more unpopular measures, which specifically discriminated the Hindus, as Muzaffar Alam shows in his standard work.

Bahādur Šāh's failure, despite his sincere efforts, in completely freeing the state from Aurangzīb's discriminatory policies is perhaps a matter of considerable consequence in the examination of the sources of strength or weakness of both the Mughals and the Sikhs (...) The imperial order to shave their beards discriminated against the Hindus alone. The order

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<sup>176</sup> Conermann, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*, 399-406.

smacked of the emperor's suspicion regarding the loyalty of the Hindus to the state. The Hindus appear to have received it with some resentment and anguish.<sup>177</sup>

Only later did it emerge that he would distance himself from his father's decisions, especially in his attitude towards the Rajputs and the Marathas.<sup>178</sup> The reason for this change in policy may have been, among other things, the fact that the new ruler had to listen to considerable criticism from large parts of the reform-oriented nobility: 'Some nobles, like Sarfraz Ḥān, realized the implications of the order [shaving the beards, TK] and tried to restrict its implementation to the Sikhs (*Nanak parasts*) only.'<sup>179</sup> Although the shaving of the beards remained compulsory for a long time, the ruler started approaching the Hindus and Sikhs elsewhere: 'Bahādur Šāh invited Guru Gobindh Singh to his court, conferred upon him a robe of honor, and asked him to accompany the royal march towards the Deccan.'<sup>180</sup> But this was not all. Much more surprising was the interest of the new ruler in the Šī'ites, which, officially, would never have been permitted under Aurangzīb's rule. In 1709, when our author has already been working two years on his *Ma'āšir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, Šāh Bahādur made a decisive step towards the Šī'ites in the north of his empire. In that year, he called on the city of Lahore to recite the Friday prayer (*ḥuṭba*) in the šī'ite style. The following *ḥuṭba* debate was so intense that it lasted for another two years: this meant that Bahādur personally had to go to Lahore in 1711 to discuss the issue with the city's local scholars.<sup>181</sup>

We can therefore rightly assume that even before the debate started, Musta'idd Ḥān must have been aware of the fact that šī'ite families and nobles had been acquiring more and more influence at the royal court. Upon Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur's death in 1712, the Sayyīd brothers, both strong šī'ite followers, took over only eleven months into Jahāndār Šāh's short reign (1712-1713). These famous šī'ite brothers had successfully expanded their influence and networks during the reign of Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur, which then led to them to power some years later: this would not have been a secret to our chronicler. It was primarily the new emperor's approach towards the šī'its '(...) which marked the beginning of the new policy',<sup>182</sup> as Muzaffar Allam argues. Indeed, Šāh Bahādur sought new directions to governing his realm by

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<sup>177</sup> Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India*.

<sup>178</sup> Chandra, *Medieval India*, 463.

<sup>179</sup> Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India*, 167.

<sup>180</sup> *Idem*, 138.

<sup>181</sup> Unfortunately, not much can be found about this event. See the short remarks in Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*, Brill, 1980, 151 and Sharīf Ja'far, *Islam in India; or, the Qānūn-i-Islām; the Customs of the Musalmāns of India; Comprising a Full and Exact Account of Their Various Rites and Ceremonies from the Moment of Birth to the Hour of Death*, ed. and transl. Gerhard Herklots, London 1921, repr. New Delhi 1972, 151. See also Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India*, 30-31, 168.

<sup>182</sup> Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India*, 168.

following '(...) the example of Akbar and invited the *ulama* to debate with them his supreme position in religious matters.'<sup>183</sup>

Regarding all these delicate attempts to reform, we must not forget the daunting tasks that the new ruler had to overcome. Hence, at the time when he wrote his text, it remained largely unclear to Musta'idd Hān how exactly the new ruler would rule his crisis-shaken empire. Only at the end of his reign and after the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* has already been completed did Bahadur finally distance himself from the controversial policies of his predecessor.

(...) Bahadur Shāh, under pressure of circumstances, had to abandon, or rather reverse, the process of his departure from the policy of Aurangzīb. Towards the end of his reign, however, he had fully realized the consequences of these measures and had decided to finally dissociate the Mughal state from Orthodoxy.<sup>184</sup>

At the time of writing the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* (1707-1710), the government of his primarily intended recipient remained largely characterised by contradictory actions, whereby Musta'idd Hān probably could not detect any red line. Thus, from the author's perspective, it would have been quite an awkward decision to draft a text for this specific intended recipient that stylised a consistent anti-non Muslim policy as the ideal government maxim, which would have indirectly condemned Šāh Bahādur's incipient. If Musta'idd Hān designed a one-dimensional text, our author surely would not have secured the benevolence of the new ruler or the reformist nobles such as the aforementioned Sarfraz Hān. Above all, he would not have gained the sympathy of the Šī'its, who had come to prominence only three years after the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* was finished and when Musta'idd Hān achieved the peak of his career.

In that context, is also a striking fact that Bahādur Šāh is never described negatively throughout the entire text,<sup>185</sup> apart from only one exception.<sup>186</sup> Rather, Musta'idd Hān skilfully portrayed Bahādur Šāh as the only noble prince who, unlike his brothers, had no negative attributes; he is instead shown as only being focused on the realm's safety. This is yet another hint that Musta'idd Hān agreed with some specific post-1707 pro-Hindu policies after Bahādur Šāh gained power and thus designed a text with which he wished to pursue his career.

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<sup>183</sup> Idem, 30-31.

<sup>184</sup> Idem, 168.

<sup>185</sup> See e.g. Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 37, 57, 61, 153, 157, 170, 199, 234, 259-260, 267, 294-295, 341-342, 372, 394, 496, in detail: 534-536. In total, I counted that the prince gets mentioned 64 times.

<sup>186</sup> Idem, 100.

These facts explain the pro-Hindu passages in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, which were, I argue, also directly addressed to many noble Hindu recipients with important posts at the court, as '(...) under Aurangzeb (...) more Hindus worked in the Mughal administration than at any previous time (...)'.<sup>187</sup> This populous group of ambitious Hindus were not permanently barred from the readings of chronicles such as our text, which played a crucial part in courtly entertainment.<sup>188</sup> In that sense, we should rightly assume that Musta'idd Ḥān did not want to lose their potential support for his career in the post-Aurangzīb era.

On the other hand, we find dissuasive anti-Hindu actions that, at first glance, clearly speak for themselves. These critical passages have been interpreted so as to describe our author as a proponent of an aggressive attitude towards the Hindus and to prove Aurangzīb's alleged fundamentalist aggression. However, as was already mentioned, Aurangzīb's hawk, the ultra-conservative 'Ināyat Allāh Ḥān, was the real driving force behind the text and thus functioned as a vital part of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*'s multiple authorship. As he expanded his career under the new ruler, we must draw the conclusion that the hawks' network outlasted Aurangzīb's death and that they mutually supported each other as before; thus, he was the last person our author wanted to anger. This explains the text's occasionally dramatic description of anti-Hindu actions: these fulfilled the wishes of the mighty 'Ināyat Allāh Ḥān and those in conservative circles. However, the decisive factor here is that our author by no means played into the hands of the hawks at court. Rather, as will be shown in the coming chapters, he skilfully relativised each of these deterrent actions in a very cautious, but still very effective, way.

Šāh 'Alam Bahādur's decision not to intervene in this particular project may have been tactical in nature. Since he did not re-open the office of the court chronicler once he assumed power, he did not openly distance himself immediately from his father's decision. In this way, he avoided snubbing Aurangzīb's powerful supporters, who continued to identify themselves with their former ruler's decisions: Šāh 'Alam Bahādur now needed them in order to consolidate his own power. Furthermore, with this tactical decision, he also might have wanted to convince the cosmopolitan intellectual elites, especially the influential *munšīs* with

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<sup>187</sup> Kinra, *Writing Self*, 292.

<sup>188</sup> This was especially the case under Akbar, about whom we are told that he enjoyed listening for hours to the reading of texts from different genres. The ' (...) thirteenth-century Persian treatise on political ethics, the *Akhlaq-i nasiri*, composed by Khwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi, a text widely taught in madrasas in Mughal India. It was regularly read aloud to the illiterate Akbar', see Barbara Metcalf, 'Introduction' in idem (ed.), *Islam in South Asia in Practice*, Princeton, 2009, 265-270, 266; see also Geeti Sen, *Paintings from the Akbar-Nama. A Visual Chronicle of Mughal India*, Calcutta, 1984, 28.

their newly acquired collective self-confidence, that he might take a different course than his father. His tacit acquiescence of Musta‘idd Ḥān’s incipient work, which certainly did not remain hidden at the court if we remember Musta‘idd and ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān’s high position at the court when the project started in 1707, might have been a very useful signal in their direction. And, after all, the result could only be beneficial for Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur: he would receive the sanctioned account of his father’s contentious reign, one that had been composed by the elite members of his court and the Muslim intellectual milieu at the beginning of the eighteenth century. With this hidden agenda 1710 in hand, the new ruler could identify exactly which of his father’s decisions they approved and which they rejected. The fact that the new ruler was capable of reforming his administration and possibly also sought a guide, and that the message of *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* might have even reached the new ruler is shown by the fact that, at the end of his reign, after the completion of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur finally renounced the controversial decisions of his predecessor.

This particular function of the text, namely a hidden agenda addressed to Aurangzīb’s successor, manifests itself in several key passages (which will all be discussed in the coming chapters). For example, Musta‘idd Ḥān starts to explicitly speak about Aurangzīb’s ‘wise’ alliance with the Hindus in combination with the annual and public promotion of Hindus; interestingly, he even adds an anecdote in which he indirectly praises šī‘it warriors and their discipline in their willingness to give their lives for the empire. The annual promotions of Hindus even went further, as Musta‘idd Ḥān stressed the fact that loyal Hindu nobles not only got a higher position, but also did so before their Muslim colleagues. Furthermore, the most important virtue which the new ruler was expected to embody was not religious piety and the fighting of the infidels, but discipline, devotion to duty, a spartan lifestyle, and loyalty to the state, all of which were consistently described as Aurangzīb’s merits. All this shows that Musta‘idd Ḥān wanted to deliver a message to the new ruler by highlighting that the latter’s most important task was *not* the spread of Islam or the random destruction of Hindu temples, but the security of the empire and all of its inhabitants. All who threatened that peace must expect harsh punishment, whereas anyone who wanted to participate in the empire’s defence should encounter no obstacles to having a successful career at the court, whether they be Hindu or Muslim. This was a text that accorded strongly to the spirit of the Mughal *Realpolitik*, which we will discuss in detail below. It was this way of ruling India which Musta‘idd Ḥān presented to the new ruler as the ideal form of government in his very pragmatic and sober style of writing.

Thus, we see that the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* should not be rigidly characterised as a chronicle designed by a single backward-looking author reporting about the past, as this would be too simplistic. Rather, the often criticised contrariness of the text enables us to understand the author's setting in life, which represents Musta'idd Ḥān's process of writing between 1707-1710, a decisive period for the coming future of Mughal rule in India. Furthermore, it should also be read as a hidden agenda 1710. It served the new emperor Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur, often in a cautious and indirect way, as a guide to the right and just way to govern his empire, which had been shaken by great crises since 1707.

In order to understand how Musta'idd Ḥān managed all these circumstances and to understand his skilled narrative strategy, I will focus primarily on his anecdotes, all entirely ignored by research so far. My methodological approach is largely based on a narratological investigation, which I will discuss in the next section. I will end this chapter with an analysis of a striking anecdote that plays out in the twelfth year, thus exactly at the beginning of Musta'idd Ḥān's own writing after he laid aside the *'Ālamgīr-nāma*, the template for the first ten years of his writing. Now free from the 1,000-page chronicle, we will witness for the first time the author's confident self-positioning in the text.

## SECTION 3: THE METHOD

*Ironically, just as historiography may be hidden in other generic guises, fiction may easily hide in a form that Western eyes have a little too hastily seen as historiography. - Textures of Time.*<sup>189</sup>

### PRELUDE

Only recently have a handful of Islamic historians begun to use narrative theory to analyse their sources. Although they have gained fresh perspectives on their textual material and their studies have been warmly welcomed, ‘traditional’ historians still seem to have a very low opinion of narrative theory, probably because it derives from literature studies. Before I discuss my methodological approach, I will present the three main points of critique that have been made against the use of a narratological approach to historical texts. This is the standard critique which dominates all discussions on this subject, be it in journals, reviews, or at conferences.<sup>190</sup>

- 1) The concepts derive from the analysis of novels and literature studies, so they are referring to fictional texts, not to factual texts. Musta‘idd Ḥān’s work is a factual text. It is unimportant for a narratological analysis if the text is fictional or factual. Only poeticity is important (that is to say, the analysis of the literary methods that the author uses to create an exciting narrative or to strengthen the recipient’s emotions).
- 2) The concepts are described using modern terms with which historical authors, particularly non-European ones, were not familiar. This is, however, unproblematic, as narratology only provides us with the categories to describe the narrative structure, the interpretation, and the effect of the narrative. Although many historians or scholars of Islamic studies now search for the form and genre of the text, finding a ‘subject’, an ‘aorist’, or a ‘relative clause’, these are also nearly all modern terms and were not known to historical author(s) either; nonetheless, they are absolutely accepted as key terms in historical investigation. We should remember that the author was unaware of categories, structures, and perceptions for which we have several meanings today. This is exactly the case with the analysis of conflicts, narrative speech, the analepses, and the character’s qualities. They all describe phenomena which are part of the *Ma‘āṣir ‘Ālamgīrī*, but were not the subject of theoretical reflection at that time. Even

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<sup>189</sup> Rao, *Textures of time*, 257; Sheldon Pollock, ‘Prettextures of Time. Part of a Forum on Textures of Time. Writing History in South India, 1600-1800 (2001)’ in *History and Theory*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2007, 364-381; Velcheru Narayana Rao, David Shulman, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ‘A Pragmatic Response’ in *ibid.*, 409-427.

<sup>190</sup> The following points base on Finnern’s reflection, see *idem*, *Narratologie und biblische Exegese*, 2 ff, as well as my experiences presenting and discussing my project.

if the transmitter and the receiver do not know exactly how, the narrative still ‘works’.

- 3) ‘How should we deal with the ‘holy sections’ in the text? What shall we do if Musta‘idd Hān quotes verses from the holy *Qur’ān*? Is narratological investigation still an appropriate method for this specific sort of text?’ This is certainly an appropriate objection. Nevertheless, systematic theological concerns should not stop us from asking precisely what happens during the reception of *Qur’ānic* verses in the *Ma‘āṣir ‘Ālamgīrī*. In general, it can be argued that the process of the reception of the *Qur’ān* certainly does not differ that much from other ‘media products’. One can argue theologically, however, that God speaks through the Prophet Muḥammad to the people by using these general human processes of reception. Only the content differs from profane texts, and it is therefore totally legitimate to investigate exactly how these ‘holy sections’ were received, and why and where Musta‘idd Hān placed such verses in the *Ma‘āṣir ‘Ālamgīrī*.

These are basically the arguments which are brought against using the narratological method on non-fictional, historical material. In the next section, I will talk in more detail about narratology, especially in terms from whence it derives and which kind of narratology dominates the scientific landscape today.

#### THE NARRATOLOGICAL APPROACH AND ITS MEANING<sup>191</sup>

The phrase ‘narratology’ was first used in 1969 by Tzvetan Todorov in his *Grammaire du Décaméron*, where he defined it as the ‘*cet ouvrage relève d’une science qui n’existe pas encore, disons la NARRATOLOGIE, la science du récit.*’<sup>192</sup> If we want to classify narrative analysis in the canon of disciplinary methods, it is important to define what this analysis means by looking at what it includes and what it does not. The problem, however, lies precisely here, since the ideas and concepts behind this kind of analysis are very vague and heterogeneous. It is therefore difficult to describe narratological analysis in terms of certain models and methodological steps. Fortunately, some potential ideas were given by Peter Wenzel in 2004 in the form of a ‘tool-kit’.<sup>193</sup> Since then, and only very slowly, some analytical questions have been formulated. The reason for this might be an uncertain

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<sup>191</sup> For this part, I refer primarily to Finnnern, *Narratologie und biblische Exegese*, 27f.

<sup>192</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *Grammaire du Décaméron*, The Hague, 1969, 10. This term is often used to define the French structuralistic approaches to the narrative and is compared to the German *Erzähltheorie* (‘theory of the narrative’). Following Finnnern and Nünning, I will use them both synonymously.

<sup>193</sup> Peter Wenzel, *Einführung in die Erzählanalyse. Kategorien, Modelle, Probleme*, Trier, 2004.



understanding of the methods, but the delay has also been caused by ‘latent hostility against the concrete use of methods’ within literature studies.<sup>194</sup>

This difficulty is not nearly so apparent in the field of exegetical<sup>195</sup> and ancient studies.<sup>196</sup> Sönke Finnern’s groundbreaking study filled this gap: it can be therefore seen as pioneering contribution within this field. For the first time ever, Finnern presented a set of detailed instructions for the analysis of narratives by combining the main theories in this field of research.<sup>197</sup>

This research field changes all the time; especially during the last few years, it has increased enormously. This being said, we cannot reduce it to certain schools, such as the French structuralists between 1966 and 1972, because this would oversimplify the current state of affairs. Unfortunately, there is still no overall presentation of the state of the art.<sup>198</sup> I will thus focus on the actual tendencies within this field of research instead of presenting the development of different narratologies.

The history of narratology can be divided into four stages: 1) the beginning (1910-1966), 2) classical structuralism (1966-1975/85), 3) continuation and decline (1980-1995), and 4) post-classical or post-structural narratology (since 1995, but with its origins in 1985). Narratology can be seen both as a subject area and as a theory within a discipline. It is important to point out that, in terms of concrete analysis or even methodology, no specific description has been settled upon. Therefore, I could just have easily called this thesis a ‘narrative analysis’ rather than a ‘narratological investigation’.<sup>199</sup>

However, we still can use the following definition of narratology: ‘Narratology is the science of narrative.’<sup>200</sup> Accepting this, we need to also define exactly what a narrative is. Brian Richardson presents us with a meaningful working hypothesis: ‘[A] narrative is a

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<sup>194</sup> Simone Winko, ‘Methode’, in *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. Klaus Weimar, Berlin 2000., 585-588.

<sup>195</sup> First and Foremost Nitsche, *Arbeitsbuch literaturwissenschaftliche Bibelauslegung*.

<sup>196</sup> See e.g. See De Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the Odyssey*, Cambridge 2011; Jonas Grethlein and Antonios Rengakos (eds.), *Narratology and Interpretation*, Berlin 2009; Michael Hausmann, *Die Leserlenkung durch Tacitus in den Tiberius- und Claudiusbüchern der "Annalen"*, Berlin 2009; Carolin Dewald, *Thucydides’ War Narrative*, Berkeley 2009; Emily Baragwanath and Mathieu de Bakke (eds.), *Myth, Truth, and Narrative in Herodotus*, Oxford 2012.

<sup>197</sup> Finnern, *Narratologie und biblische Exegese*

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>199</sup> Ute Eisen, *Die Poetik der Apostelgeschichte. Eine narratologische Studie*, Göttingen, 2006. German narratologists have to choose between the following options: *Erzähltextanalyse*, *Erzählanalyse*, *narrative Analyse*, and *narratologische Analyse*.

<sup>200</sup> Finnern, *Narratologie und biblische Exegese*, 29.

representation of causally related series of events.’<sup>201</sup> Having cleared this up, I will very briefly present some important lines of the development within current narratology.

Since the mid-90s, there has been a boom in narratology.<sup>202</sup> Nearly all active narratologists agree that their work now goes far beyond the classical structuralist approach. Nevertheless, this does not mean that all former narratological methods have been totally abandoned; rather, they have been modified and re-interpreted. Therefore, the terms ‘post-classical’ or ‘post-structuralist’ are not very effective and function as a makeshift solution.

Certainly, the key aspect of narratology nowadays is its ‘intermediacy’, meaning that concepts of narratology can be deployed with regards to different media products. Narratology can deal with the literary narratives of all times and cultures,<sup>203</sup> films, plays, comics, poetry, visual arts, radio plays, or even computer games: what is crucial here is that it can also be used in the field of historical science. Here, cross-genre comparison, including changing concepts of description, is a crucial aspect of the current theory of narratology and must be seen as a contribution to the field of the ‘cultural sciences’ (*Kulturwissenschaften*).<sup>204</sup>

This ‘intermediacy’ is the common ground of the four following tendencies of modern narratology. Although these developed separately, it is widely accepted that a sharp distinction would be unproductive and that they can be brought together.<sup>205</sup> We should

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<sup>201</sup> Richardson, *Recent Concepts of Narrative and the Narratives of Narrative Theory*.

<sup>202</sup> Volker Nünning, *Von der strukturalistischen Narratologie zur „postklassischen“ Erzähltheorie. Ein Überblick über neue Ansätze - Theoretische Positionen - Transdisziplinäre Perspektiven*, Tübingen, 2004.

<sup>203</sup> Ute Eisen, *Die Poetik der Apostelgeschichte*, 45-47.

<sup>204</sup> Stephan Conermann, *Islamwissenschaft als Kulturwissenschaft*.

<sup>205</sup> Finnern, *Narratologie*, 36 lists the following four major tendencies: 1) postmodern narratology. Some narratologists, who are influenced and shaped by post-structuralism, question the fixed categories of narratology to point out that meaning is variable and can only be clarified through the interaction of texts (intertextuality). 2) The pragmatic turn. Nowadays, narratological approaches increasingly recognise that a narrative is always part of human communication, a fact which structuralist narratology ignored completely because it was working only on co-text. 3) The cognitive turn. Following the cognitive turn means firstly describing the process of text production. However, the focus lies primarily on the description of the text reception in an empirical and cognitive-psychological way. The analysis of the text reception can be divided into two parts: Firstly, the description of previous knowledge. Here, the focus of the analysis is on the narratives, ‘frame’, and ‘script’, which constitute the indispensable cultural and historical knowledge of the recipient. A ‘frame’ is our substantial semiotic wisdom, such as the idea of a terrorist, a bird, or a desert. The ‘script’ refers to previous procedural knowledge (situational script). In other words: what can we expect in a certain situation of the narrative, e.g. in a restaurant, at the dentist, or at the court of Aurgangzib. We expect in a certain situation of the narrative, e.g. in a restaurant, at the dentist, or at the court of Aurgangzib. Secondly, the description of the process of understanding. The issue here is one of the most interesting and certainly the most challenging: how can we analyse those ‘frames’ that fall outside the text? Former structural narratological analyses focused only on the text. Now the role played by the recipient has been brought into narratology: empathy, sympathy and excitement (i.e., the emotions of the recipient) are gaining more and more attention in contemporary narratology. 4) Cultural/historical turn. Surprisingly enough, it is only recently that the historical and cultural context has attracted the attention of narratology. This cultural/historical turn therefore has a lot in common with the cognitive turn mentioned above, as the focus is the context of the narrative and not the structuralistic description of the narrative. The roots of the cultural/historical turn can be found in the feminist narratology, which began

therefore conclude that contemporary literary theory and narratology, which is often called ‘pragmatic narratology’, have recognised the importance of the historical/cultural context of the narrative.<sup>206</sup> Now that we are more familiar with these specific expressions, I will discuss the author’s use of anecdotes and how to analyse them properly. The analysis of the neglected anecdotes of the *Ma’āşir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* are a crucial part of my methodological approach to the text.

## THE ANALYSIS OF THE ANECDOTES

If we want to understand the performance<sup>207</sup> of the text, the analysis of anecdotes is of great importance.<sup>208</sup> As a literary genre, the anecdote is generally based on a remarkable and characteristic incident in the life of at least one character. The three most important features of an anecdote are the main point of a story, the reduction to the essential, and the sharp characterisation of one or several characters. Richard Bauman presents a clear definition of this genre:

An anecdote is a short (...) narrative, purporting to recount a true incident involving real people. Etymologically, ‘anecdote’ derives from classical antecedents (Greek *anekdotos*, Latin *anecdota*) referring to things unpublished, suggesting the importance of oral transmission, but anecdotes have also served as a popular literary resource since classical antiquity. The characteristic formal features of the genre include a focus on a single scene and a tendency to limit attention to two actors, generally a named principal and an interlocutor. Anecdotes tend to be heavily dialogic in construction, often culminating in a punch line rendered in direct discourse. Anecdotes also tend to attach themselves to individuals known for their quick wit and verbal dexterity, often celebrities, intellectuals, and local or family characters.<sup>209</sup>

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around the middle of the 1980s, and within postcolonial narrative theory. They both point out that the context cannot be ignored. This cultural/historical turn can therefore be seen as the logical result of the cognitive turn, as the specific previous knowledge of the author and its reader is always cultural and historical. Certainly, the cultural/historical turn is crucial for the relationship between narratology and the historical-critical method.

<sup>206</sup> Nevertheless, we still have to wait for concrete methodological steps to analyse this context. See Finner. *Narratologie und biblische Exegese*, 46. Concerning the recognition of the historical and cultural context, see Mieke Bal, ‘Close Reading Today. From Narratology to Cultural Analysis’ in Walther Grünzweig and Andreas Solbach (eds.), *Grenzüberschreitungen*, Tübingen, 1999, 19-40.

<sup>207</sup> See e.g. Rosalind O’Hanlon, ‘Performance in a World of Paper. Puranic Histories and Social Communication in Early Modern India’ in *Past and Present*, vol. 219, no. 1, 2013, 87-126

<sup>208</sup> Richardson, *Recent Concepts of Narrative and the Narratives of Narrative Theory*; Volker Nünning, *Von der strukturalistischen Narratologie zur „postklassischen“ Erzähltheorie*.

<sup>209</sup> Bauman, Richard, ‘Anecdote’, in David Herman/et al. (eds.), *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, London, 2008, 22; also more in detail idem, *Story, Performance and Event. Contextual Studies of Oral Narrative*, Cambridge, 1986; Louis Brownlow, *The Anatomy of the Anecdote*, Chicago, 1960; regarding the use of the anecdote within European, especially German, prose and historical writings see first of all Volker Weber, *Anekdote. Die andere Geschichte. Erscheinungsformen der Anekdote in der deutschen Literatur, Geschichtsschreibung und Philosophie*, Tübingen, 1993; also Klaus Doderer, *Die Kurzgeschichte in*

In Islamic literature, the anecdote has played an important role from the beginning. Outstanding writers such as al-Ğāḥiẓ al-Baṣrī (died 868/869) interspersed their stories with numerous anecdotes, such as in his seven-volume work *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* (*the Book of Animals*). In Persian literature, the anecdote (*fakā-i*) is also an important literary genre, which can be seen in, along with many others, the works of Sa‘dī (died around 1190) and ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān Ğāmī (died 1414). During the Ottoman period, a strong folktale tradition existed, with anecdotes, legends, songs, riddles, and proverbs. Known representatives of the troubadours (*āşık*) were Pīr Sultān Abdāl (died 1550) and Karacaoğlan (died 1679).<sup>210</sup>

However, within historical research, anecdotes are rarely the subject of serious attention, as they lack any historical and factual value.<sup>211</sup> Rather, it is held that they only serve as the text’s decoration and are thus only recounted in passing, if at all. Selma Alavi’s conclusion in her essay on the three main sources<sup>212</sup> which report on Aurangzeb’s reign serves as a good example of how the *Ma’āşir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*’s anecdotes have been labelled as historically useless:

Musta‘id has either overlooked many important events or given very brief information. On the contrary we find detailed mention of children playing in a village called Sonapat or of an accident involving elephants in Pīr Panjāl pass, or an elaborate note on ‘Ālamgīr’s hunting trip during the fourth year of his reign (...) All such details seem superfluous, particularly when we see the author giving little or no attention to historically crucial events (...) it may be added that Musta‘id has at places copied or abridged the *Mir‘āt* without acknowledgement (...).<sup>213</sup>

In her critique, Alvi overlooks the fact that these anecdotes,<sup>214</sup> which at first sight provide little or no material for historical analysis, are crucial elements of the author’s narrative strategy to classify and explain the disasters of Aurangzīb’s rule in a meaningful way. Musta‘idd Ḥān, for instance, highlights the catastrophe in the Pīr Panjāl pass to describe Aurangzīb in the

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*Deutschland. Ihre Form und ihre Entwicklung*, Darmstadt, 1980; Günther Schweikle and Dieter Burdorf (eds.), *Metzler-Literatur-Lexikon. Begriffe und Definitionen*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Stuttgart, 1990.

<sup>210</sup> See, e.g. Berna Moran, *Der türkische Roman. Eine Literaturgeschichte in Essays. Vol. I. Von Ahmet Mithat bis A. H. Tanpınar*, trans. Béatrice Hendrich, Wiesbaden, 2012; Wiebke Walther, *Kleine Geschichte der arabischen Literatur. Von der vorislamischen Zeit bis zur Gegenwart*, Munich, 2004.

<sup>211</sup> The same can be said about the use of poems and, more specifically in our case, the so-called *inšā’*-literature; see here Rajeev Kinra’s criticism of Jadunath Sarkar’s attitude to the *inšā’*-literature, which Sarkar judges as being ‘of little historical value’, *ibid.*, *Mughal Administration*, Calcutta 1952, 216-219, quoted from Rajeev Kinra, *Master and Munshi*, 529, footnote 2.

<sup>212</sup> Just to repeat, these are Musta‘idd Ḥān’s (d. 1726) *Ma’āşir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, Muḥammad Kāẓim’s (d. 1681) *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*, and Baḥtāvar Han’s (d. 1685) *Mir‘āt al-‘ālam*.

<sup>213</sup> Alvi, *The Historians of Aurangzeb*, 69-70.

<sup>214</sup> See Baumann, ‘Anecdote’; *idem*, *Story, Performance and Event*; Louis Brownlow, *The Anatomy of the Anecdote*; Volker Weber, *Anekdoten*; Klaus Doderer, *Die Kurzgeschichte in Deutschland*; Günther Schweikle, *Metzler-Literatur-Lexikon*, 357.

context of such a disaster as a compassionate and forgiving ruler, grieving about the tragic fate of his common soldiers. Additionally, this section particularly highlights the cruelty of nature, which often turns against Aurangzīb and his troops and distracts from the actual military fiasco.<sup>215</sup> The disaster in the mountains is also closely connected with the hunting scene mentioned by Alvi above, which depicts the general aggressiveness of nature against the protagonist and his troops, and highlights the sense of a general state of emergency that pervades the entire chronicle.

It is through such anecdotes that the protagonist consistently remains a victim within the narrative, a depiction that suggests that the text's recipient should forgive him for the mistakes that led to the crisis that broke out after his death in 1707. In connection with both of these catastrophes (the hunting and the mountain disasters), the author focuses on Aurangzīb's constant desire to forgive, as he orders the release of the animals that had just attacked his entourage. In addition, to keep his recipient's attention, Musta'idd Ḥān wisely applies here effects such as tension and surprise,<sup>216</sup> as he places this anecdote immediately after more sober representations of administrative work. The section also begins with the description that hunting had generally been a great pleasure for the ruler and by relating the first successes during the hunt; however, it ends abruptly and unexpectedly in disaster. In such a way, the effect of a state of emergency is deployed in a highly effective manner: there is no escape, even in those settings which were supposed to give the protagonist rest and pleasure. Thus, the text increases the sympathy of the reader for the protagonist and his ordeal.<sup>217</sup> Finally, it needs to be pointed out that hunting was an extremely important political, public, and representative act<sup>218</sup> and crucial for alliance building.<sup>219</sup> it would be therefore too harsh to call a detailed description of hunting within a chronicle superfluous.<sup>220</sup>

This being said, the present chapter wants to show the opposite, namely that anecdotes are in fact crucial to understanding the text's normative structure, and that it would be a fundamental error to keep on labelling them as historically irrelevant. Since Selma Alavi's rather traditional approach towards historical material, a lot has changed: Mughal historians

<sup>215</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āşir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 45-46.

<sup>216</sup> Peter Wenzel, 'Zur Analyse der Spannung' in idem, *Einführung in die Erzähltextanalyse. Kategorien, Modelle, Probleme*, Trier, 2004.

<sup>217</sup> The recipient's emotions will be analysed, in detail in a separate chapter - regarding the 'emotional turn', see, Thomas Anz, 'Emotional Turn? Beobachtungen zur Gefühlsforschung' in *literaturkritik*, vol. 12, 2006, [http://www.literaturkritik.de/public/rezension.php?rez\\_id=10267](http://www.literaturkritik.de/public/rezension.php?rez_id=10267), last accessed 20/8/2013.

<sup>218</sup> In detail Thomas Allsen, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History*, Philadelphia, 2006.

<sup>219</sup> See in detail Faruqi, *Princes of the Mughal Empire*, 66-133, 290.

<sup>220</sup> Alvi, *The Historians of Aurangzeb*, 78.

such as Muzaffar Alam, Kumkum Chatterjee, Stephan Conermann, Jorge Flores, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam have all approached their texts in a fresh way. Chatterjee, for example, focused in her latest important article explicitly on the Mangalkavya narratives, a distinguished Bengali literary genre, and argued that neglected anecdotes about miracles and monsters were in fact crucial for integrating the ruling Mughals into regional Bengali culture and society:

Bengali narratives from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries contain eulogies to the distant Mughal emperors who are compared to and equated with Hindu divinities and epic heroes. Akbar is compared to Arjuna and Brihaspati and even Aurangzeb is compared to Ramachandra. Resonances of this are also found in other parts of India.<sup>221</sup>

In this context, Jorge Flores focuses on the strange and marvellous narratives between Mughal India and the Habsburg Empire, emphasising that these parts of the text are very valuable in a detailed analysis: '(...) as strange as they are entertaining, (they) embrace significant meanings that should be detailed.'<sup>222</sup>

This approach suits our text: we will see that Musta'idd Hān's anecdotes indeed fulfil a vital function and that, in the words of Flores, they have 'significant meanings that should be detailed'. Anecdotes allowed Musta'idd Hān to portray Aurangzeb as a victim of his time, to justify his actions from this perspective, and to considerably increase the sympathy of the intended recipient for the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*'s isolated protagonist.<sup>223</sup> The anecdotes are therefore crucial for the author to explain the numerous *contingent events* which occurred during Aurangzeb's reign in a meaningful (*sinnstiftend*) way.<sup>224</sup> Furthermore, the anecdotes enable Musta'idd Hān to clearly position himself within the text. This happens, as will be shown, in marked contrast to the actual protagonist of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, namely Aurangzeb himself. Equally, it is through the analysis of the anecdotes that we discover Musta'idd Hān's individual style. This is crucial, as historical research has complained of a lack of first-person narratives in the Mughal domains.<sup>225</sup> Finally, anecdotes are crucial for understanding which emotions our author sought to evoke in his intended recipient.

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<sup>221</sup> Kumkum Chatterjee, *Goddess Encounters. Mughals, Monsters and the Goddess in Bengal*, in *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 47, no. 5, 2013, 1-53. 45.

<sup>222</sup> Jorge Flores, 'Distant Wonders. The Strange and the Marvellous between Mughal India and Habsburg Iberia in the Early Seventeenth Century' in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 49, no. 3, 2007, 553-581, 574.

<sup>223</sup> Werner Habicht and Ina Schabert (eds.), *Sympathie lenkung in den Dramen Shakespeares. Studien zur publikumsbezogenen Dramaturgie, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Englischen Philologie* 9, Munich, 1978.

<sup>224</sup> See in detail Conermann, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*, chapter 3-5, 135-355.

<sup>225</sup> Although they had, nevertheless, a respectable position within Mughal *belles-lettres*. More in detail, see Alam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 320-321.

It is a major goal of my work to answer these questions within the coming chapters. However, before we go deeper into the analysis, I will, as a foretaste, discuss two important anecdotes which Musta‘idd Ḥān skilfully positioned immediately at the beginning of the text’s second half (in the eleventh and twelfth chapters), after finally being freed from his reliance on the famous *Ālamgīr-nāma*. His intention was clear: he wanted to show that a truly self-confident *munšī*, after a long period of consideration, could voluntarily raise his pen in order to write and freely comment on the life of Aurangzīb Ālamgīr. Additionally, we will witness the author’s indirect praise of the Mughal meritocracy<sup>226</sup> and the solidarity among his colleagues. This solidarity gave them the confidence to interrupt nobles while they had lunch in a truly extraordinary setting with a highly symbolic meaning: the melon garden

#### ON MUSTA‘IDD ḤĀN’S INCREASING SELF-CONFIDENCE

Below I would like to analyse a striking anecdote which is crucial to understanding the narrative strategy of Musta‘idd Ḥān. Although these sections might contain very little useful historical material at first glance, I will give them a lot of attention in my work. Here, we recognise that the author had creative freedom for the first time, as he was no longer obliged to submit to the strict rules of a chronicler. Upon closer inspection, we also encounter the author as an individual behind the text, which allows his personal and skilful narrative strategy to become recognisable.

The introductory anecdote is too long to quote here, as it takes more than three pages of the eleventh chapter. Here, the author explains how the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* started, which relied on the initiative of the potent ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān. This patron insisted that it would be appropriate for a powerful ruler like Aurangzeb to have a glorious chronicle that would record his heroic deeds, especially since all of his predecessors had had their own chronicles. At the beginning of this anecdote, Musta‘idd Ḥān strictly kept to the normative specifications for becoming a successful *munšī*. These were, in addition to the numerous technical working conditions, restraint and modesty. Čandar-bhān ‘Brahman’ (died 1662-3), the celebrated *munšī* of the seventeenth century and the exemplar for so many careers at the Mughal court, will be discussed below in detail. Nevertheless, we will here quote briefly from one of the letters he addressed to his son Ḥwāja- bhān, in which he presents an agenda on how to act properly at the early stage of one’s career:

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<sup>226</sup> I will discuss the respective literature on this topic below.

Initially, it is necessary for one to acquire training in the (Mughal) system of norms (*aḥlāq*). It is appropriate to listen always to the advice of elders and act accordingly (...) Besides, a *munṣī* should be discreet and virtuous.<sup>227</sup>

If we look more closely, the present anecdote allows Musta‘idd Ḥān to put his own qualities confidently into the foreground. ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān began to enumerate Musta‘idd Ḥān’s qualities to convince the hesitating future chronicler: ‘You have tasted the cup of meaning, and possess sufficient ability to express the praise of Ālamgir and to discharge this task.’<sup>228</sup> Undoubtedly, this praise would have been pleasant for Musta‘idd Ḥān to hear, since it came from the most influential *munṣī* in Aurangzeb’s government.

Even though Musta‘idd Ḥān has not yet emerged as a chronicler, it becomes very clear that he was only willing to accept this new work under very professional and clarified preconditions. By taking three pages to relate this anecdote, Musta‘idd Ḥān was underlining the fact that he did not accept the job immediately and without a great deal of consideration. Apparently, our author did not want to be seen as a spineless careerist who accepted each task immediately so that he could forge ahead on the career ladder. Rather, he expresses his doubts and tactically apologised for his dilatoriness, saying that he did not believe himself to be suited to the task at hand.<sup>229</sup>

Furthermore, this anecdote from the eleventh chapter shows the significant degree of freedom our author felt when making decisions. It is obvious that he could articulate his concerns clearly, since he criticised the decision of ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān to chose him as a chronicler, and that he wanted to start his work only under very specific preconditions. It took some time before he finally responded to the insistent ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān: ‘(...) If the sheets of the news letters of the court and the provinces be collected, (only) then, the work of the composition may be accomplished (...).’<sup>230</sup> Our author did not feel that he was exposed to a tyrannical government and he did not show any anxiety about articulating his strong scepticism with regards to the new project. Rather, he calmly explains his concerns and decision to his superiors, evidently without fearing any punishment. It is exactly this confidence and the freedom to express his own opinion, even towards the highest state officials, which we need to understand for the analysis of the second half of the text. This becomes particularly evident in the next anecdote, the narration of which begins in chapter 12. Here, Musta‘idd Ḥān talks

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<sup>227</sup> Alam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 315/316; see also in detail Rajeev Kinra, *Master and Munshī*, 530-531.

<sup>228</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 68.

<sup>229</sup> Idem, 68-69.

<sup>230</sup> Idem, 69.



about his influential colleagues and how these *munšīs* helped each other to achieve their goals.

The second anecdote plays out in the twelfth year of ‘Ālamgīr Aurangzīb’s reign (1669-1670). Musta‘idd Ḥān writes:

Muḥammad Ya‘qūb, about whom something will be written afterwards, narrated to me [the author], “Subḥān Qūlī Ḥān took me with him on a visit to his melon-ground. Rustam Bī Atāliq and I were sitting together on one side when Mīr Muḥammad Šihāb ad-Dīn came to me and said: ‘My father calls me but I am not getting my master’s permission to go.’ At this time the Atāliq and I supported this request saying that a letter might be kept written so that after the permission was given, there might not be the delay of writing. We went to him at the time of his meal, made the request, and got his permission. On that occasion, Šihāb ad-Dīn, too, presented to the Ḥān some pieces of šawl sent by his father. The letter received the royal seal and the Ḥān offered prayers for his journey. When he had gone some steps, the Ḥān called him back and said: ‘You are going to Hindustān where you will become a great man! I hope you will not forget me.’<sup>231</sup>

At first sight, this anecdote does not make any sense: it does not fit into the general structure of the twelfth chapter, which is characterised by ongoing conflicts. What might have been the reasons behind Musta‘idd Ḥān’s decision to insert this anecdote into his text once he had been freed from his former template, the *Ālamgīr-nāma*? It is at this point, namely the transition between two sections of the text, where we can identify Musta‘idd Ḥān’s narrative strategy at its best. An anecdote such as the present one therefore delivers important material for unmasking the text’s possible second layer and cannot be overlooked.

While it is the use of direct speech that strikes the reader first, since its use is rather exceptional within the *Ma‘āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*, it is primarily the character’s action and setting on which I will focus. Within the first anecdote, Musta‘idd Ḥān gave detailed information about the project’s origin and ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān’s intention. This is in fact a narrative of a job interview, which primarily allowed the author to highlight his skills and, importantly, the relatively high degree of freedom he had to pronounce his concerns. The second anecdote differs sharply from the first one. Here, we meet for the first time the author’s chosen companions, with whose actions he identifies and with whom he wanted to be seen. To

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<sup>231</sup> Idem, 91; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma‘āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*, 56-57.

understand the author's background, we need to dig deeper in order to analyse all the possible meanings of these minor characters<sup>232</sup> and, especially, their strange setting, the melon garden.

What stands out, first and foremost, is that Musta'idd Ḥān's companion Ḥwājā Muḥammad Ya'qūb, together with Rustam Bī Atāliq, are the real pulse of the present section, not the emperor or a nobleman, as had been the case before: both act as truly confident characters. Muḥammad Ya'qūb and Rustam Bī Atāliq support Šihāb ad-Dīn's plan from the beginning and insist that there is no time to lose: '(...) The Atāliq and I supported this request saying that a letter might be kept written so that after the permission was given there might not be delay of writing.'<sup>233</sup> The other characters are worried and afraid (Šihāb ad-Dīn) or passive (the Ḥān): it is our author's companion who provides the solution for the concerned Šihāb ad-Dīn. Only through their personal intervention is it possible for the latter to start his career in Hindustān. Additionally, Muḥammad Ya'qūb wanted to show that he had not taken a wrong decision by supporting Šihāb ad-Dīn, as the Ḥān, at the anecdote's end, was sure about Šihāb ad-Dīn's future success ('You are going to Hindustān where you will become a great man').

Muḥammad Ya'qūb's confidence regarding the support of Šihāb ad-Dīn's career in Hindustān is also reflected in the fact that they visited the Ḥān while the latter had his meal ('we went to him at the time of his meal'), without even thinking to wait until he had finished. The serving of food was a crucial part of courtly ceremony: it was used to stage distance between the different members of court and was thus a central part of the highly sophisticated etiquette at the Mughal court.

Food was deeply entwined with the larger political environment (...) The royal court, whether it was established at the Mughal seat or the capitals of smaller regional kingdoms, recognized that food was a central element in political theatre.<sup>234</sup>

Muḥammad Ya'qūb's interruption of this 'political theatre' reflects the considerable level of self-confidence possessed by the author's contacts. As such, the phrase 'we went to him at the time of his meal' should be considered precisely in this context, as Musta'idd Ḥān could have simply omitted this sentence if it had not suited his narrative strategy.

Additionally, the present anecdote is of particular importance because it reflects the specific shade of meritocracy which characterises the entire *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*: this will be discussed

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<sup>232</sup> See Finnern, *Narratologie und biblische Exegese*, 53-56, 179-183, 365-367; Eder, *Figur im Film*, 541-548.

<sup>233</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 91. I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āṣirī Ālamgīrī*, 56-57.

<sup>234</sup> Ray Krishnendu and Tulasi Srinivas (eds.), *Curried Cultures. Globalization, Food, and South Asia*, Berkeley, 2012, 51; other examples regarding the importance of food for the political theatre can be found in Annemarie Schimmel, *The Empire of the Great Mughals. History, Art, and Culture*, London, 2004, 138, 148, 164, 189, 191.

in more detail below, but we also need to make a brief comment on it here. According to our author, Mughal India under Aurangzeb was not an oppressed mass in fear of an omnipotent Muslim tyrant. Rather, in the coming chapters, Musta‘idd Ḥān repeatedly emphasised the fact that so long as people worked hard and identified themselves with the imperial idea, there was no limit to their careers, regardless of whether they were Sunni, Hindu, or Shi‘it. Musta‘idd Ḥān and his companion Muḥammad Ya‘qūb were far from alone in having such a view on the value of a strong work ethic. Čandar-bhān Brahman reported on this attitude, which he recognised within their common milieu from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards: ‘(...) (Čandar-bhān) viewed the Mughal state as one in which meritocracy mattered and social mobility was possible if one had talent and was willing to work hard.’<sup>235</sup>

The author’s firm conviction in an efficient meritocracy was closely linked to the strong cohesion within his milieu, which considerably increased the new collective self-confidence of the *munšīs*.<sup>236</sup> Abū ‘l-Barakāt al-Lāhauri (1609-1645), for example, a formidable literary critic, expressed his admiration for his friend Čandar-bhān in the following verses:

(...) the eye and lamp of intention, the head slate in book learning and insight, the pride and joy of the courageous and fortunate imperial house, the opening verse in the preface of wealth and glory, the (auspicious) lines on the forehead of elegant language, the imprint on the seal-ring of eloquence, the Sahbān of the age, the most elegant man of the times, the lord of poets (malik al-shu‘arā) Chandar Bhān.<sup>237</sup>

No longer is the ruler the measure of all things, the most elegant man of the times. Now the emphasis has started to shift towards Musta‘idd Ḥān’s colleague Čandar-bhān and his companions, who had started their career as simple *munšīs* but worked their way up to become the new celebrities among the intellectuals of their times. Although the dynasty is mentioned briefly in Bhān’s verses, as it obviously was not an obstacle for the *munšī*’s own ambitions, the real object of praise is the king of poets, Čandar-bhān. This highly praised lord of poets goes one step further in his important work *Čahār Čaman* (*The Four Gardens*) and in his collected letters *Munš’āt-i Brahman*, where he places his own skills as a *munšī* not only above the art of war but even noble descent.<sup>238</sup> In Čandar-bhān’s quite risky argumentation, completely different skills were needed at the Mughal court, which only his *munšī* colleagues could deliver professionally:

<sup>235</sup> Kinra, *Master and Munshi*, 530-531.

<sup>236</sup> Idem, 529.

<sup>237</sup> Idem, 535.

<sup>238</sup> The most detailed analysis of the author and his work is Kinra recently published study, *Writing Self, Writing Empire*.

Indeed, in his (Āandar-bhān's) view attributes like high birth and martial valour, while certainly important, were not nearly enough to make someone a great leader, much less a great *wazīr*. Rather, having a knack for skills like calligraphy, managing accounts and drafting elegant letters augmented one's competence as a manager, while possessing the correct balance of diplomacy, discretion, religious tolerance, mystical sensibility and *akhlaqi* civility was what separated the truly great Mughal ministers like Rājā Todar Mal, Abū al-Fazl, Afzal Khān, Sa'd Allāh Khān and Raghūnāth Rāy-i Rāyān from others whom he saw, as it were, 'merely' as great military commanders like Mīr Jumla or taskmasters like Islām Khān.<sup>239</sup>

Āandar-bhān does not go so far as to directly criticise the nobles for their lack of courtly skills. However, he nevertheless clearly separates in his memoirs those who possessed these exceptional gifts as a secretary and as an administrator and those who did not.

Let us now return to the anecdote. After more than 90 pages, it was finally time for our author to give an example of his own presence in the text by introducing his companions and their successful mediation. The first anecdote gave evidence about his own activity on the *Ma'āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*, in which he wanted to be understood as a self-confident, independent, and individual character. In the following anecdote, he underlines the fact that his companions told him with passion about their actions as responsible patrons who tackled things immediately and instantly recognised young talents in order to promote them properly. In another anecdote, which I will discuss in the third chapter, Musta'idd Hān goes even further and acts as powerful patron himself. The present anecdote serves, therefore, as a foretaste of the increasingly confident self-positioning of the author in the chronicle.

In this, Musta'idd Hān and his companions joined a number of proto-models of *munšīs* who all had successful careers and who committed themselves to the notion of meritocracy in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Mughal India. This diversity of work was nothing special for a Mughal chronicler, as it was rather typical that a *munšī*, in addition to his work as a secretary, would serve in several other offices as well:

(...) the triangle between scribe, historian, and politico-military actor, three potentially distinct roles (...) were often collapsed in the context of the same community. The first two fell into the broad category in Persianate vocabulary of *arbāb-i qalam* 'lords of the pen', and the third of *arbāb-i saif* 'lords of the sword'; but the pen was notoriously no less mighty than the sword in the eighteenth century.<sup>240</sup>

<sup>239</sup> Idem, *Master and Munshī*, 531.

<sup>240</sup> Alam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 398.

Coming back to our anecdote, it is in fact striking that Aurangzeb, in a peaceful anecdote that finally concludes with a happy ending, is not even present. We only know that the response letter bears the royal seal. The last word thus still remains in Aurangzeb's hands, but his character only appears distantly and is passive: the active characters are Muḥammad Ya'qūb and his companion Rustum Atāliq, who both took their fates into their own hands. In addition, they seem accustomed to achieving their goals. The tight friendships, communication, and debates between this administrative elite of scribes, intellectuals, and curious travellers within Mughal India and abroad are closely related to the 'republic of letters', a concept that is frequently used to describe eighteenth-century Europe, or, in the Chinese imperial case, the 'literati':<sup>241</sup>

Figures like Sujān Rai and Chaturman (both famous *munṣif* of their time) point to the growing presence of groups which had been acculturated into the Indo-Persian 'republic of letters' in the course of the Mughal rule, and were conspicuous in the production of historiography.<sup>242</sup>

Within our anecdote, it seems that Musta'idd Ḥān was aware of being a member of an exclusive group, as the self-confidence of his companions truly characterises the anecdote's two main strands of action: the characters' mobility and their common trust in mature action based on their mutual solidarity. Once Muḥammad Ya'qūb and his companion had brought the issue to the authorities, they immediately found support among the well-organised Mughal administration, which allowed the journey to Hindustan to begin. We should rightly assume that this was not Muḥammad Ya'qūb's first successful initiative, as we cannot find the slightest hint that he showed any fear towards a despotic ruler or entourage, or that their request would not be met. Instead, everything went very smoothly. jmjm

In this context, I would like to suggest a cautious comparison with contemporary Europe, where the concept of individualism has been sought by the majority of Western scholars in order to point out the roots of their own (allegedly) rational cultural space. The assumption that we find among such scholars in regards to early modern India, and to Asian and Muslim cultures in general, is that there were fewer active intellectuals and that the elites of these societies lacked the individual curiosity concerning scientific innovations that could be found in Europe at the same time. This is important, since it has been used to help demonstrate the teleological superiority of European culture during the Enlightenment. Authors such as Niall

<sup>241</sup> Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400-1800*, Cambridge, 2010, 23.

<sup>242</sup> Idem, *Writing the Mughal World*, 411, also Muzaffar Alam, *The Culture and Politics of Persian in Precolonial Hindustan*.

Ferguson, his mentor David Landes, Heinrich August Winkler, and Joel Mokyr, all of them significant names within the history of science, still argue *en bloc* that it is in the rational early modern Western European individual that the basis for later European dominance in the ‘saddle period’ (ca. 1870-1930) over other societies and cultures can be found. In contrast, Muslim intellectuals and chroniclers are perceived as having a static perception of time and as seeing their main task as the preservation of already enriched knowledge against un-Islamic innovations. As they lacked a specific individual conception of the past and present, they, logically, also lacked the crucial skills to criticise their despotic rulers in favour of an alternative societal idea.

Jack Goodie has worked intensively on this dilemma:

Individualism (basically seen as a masculine attribute) has been appropriated by the West as a concept purporting to explain entrepreneurship and modernization in Western Europe and America, where it is a typical of the male adventurer (...) The association of individualism with Europe and America has been assumed by many, indeed most, Western historians (but) economic ‘individualism’, entrepreneurship, is a feature of merchants everywhere, not simply a Western inheritance as in the case of Robinson Crusoe (...) Individualism, especially when applied to Europe, is often associated with ‘rationality’ and the capacity to work out the best plan of action (...) Along with a capacity for innovation and exploration, these features are claimed by European scholars as attributes of their own societies in an attempt to explain the origins of ‘capitalism’ in the West.<sup>243</sup>

The setting which Musta‘idd Ḥān has chosen for his friends and their mutual action is striking; as will be shown in the next section, it must have caught the intention of Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur. The melon garden was a very exclusive place to meet, which even contemporary European travellers recognised. From the beginning of the second half of the *Ma‘āsiri Ālamgiri*, we witness the confident self-positioning of Musta‘idd Ḥān within his own text. He expresses his individual concept of the past and the right way to govern the empire and had no problems with presenting his opinion to his superiors.

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<sup>243</sup> Jack Goody, *Capitalism and Modernity. The Great Debate*, Cambridge, 2004, 8-9, 88-89, 101-2; idem, *The Theft of History*, Cambridge, 2006, 256-7; idem, *Capitalism and Modernity. The Eurasian Miracle*, Cambridge, 2010, 27-37.

## THE MELON-GARDEN

A close reading and a detailed analysis of the text's normative structure, which both aim to discover how exactly the text functions, require us to follow each of the text's specific features and to consider the multiple possibilities of why the author inserted specific adjectives, verbs, pronouns, stylistic features, and anecdotes at certain junctures. What struck me the most when I read Musta'idd Hān's second anecdote for the first time was the setting in which he placed his companion Muḥammad Ya'qūb, namely the melon garden.

This anecdote begins with an eye-opening experience in order to capture the attention of the author's intended recipient. After more than 90 pages, fruit is mentioned for the first time: 'Subhān Qūlī Hān took me with him on a visit to his melon-ground.'<sup>244</sup> The fact that the protagonist's settings are only civilised ones, such as palaces, orderly gardens, and roads, is discussed in detail in the next chapter. However, it needs to be mentioned here that Musta'idd Hān, through the present melon garden, designed a space counter to those in which Aurangzeb typically appears. While Aurangzeb felt comfortable exclusively in places which were constructed and disciplined by humans, the author's confidant Muḥammad Ya'qūb prefers a natural setting that is unique within the narrative.

For a better understanding of the present anecdote's deeper meaning, I will address quickly those actions in which Aurangzeb takes part in chapters eleven and twelve.<sup>245</sup> Right at the beginning of the eleventh year, there is the sovereign's famous ban of music,<sup>246</sup> which is followed by the demolition of beautiful stone elephants.<sup>247</sup> We witness an impending father-son conflict<sup>248</sup> and the emperor's prohibition against decorating clothes with gold coins.<sup>249</sup> In the twelfth year, the author tells us about the destruction of Brahmin schools and temples,<sup>250</sup> Šujā'at emerges as the new enemy of Aurangzeb,<sup>251</sup> another temple in Malarna is destroyed,<sup>252</sup> and three Hindus are executed.<sup>253</sup> We are informed about yet another temple destruction at Kashi:<sup>254</sup> more natural disasters happen at this point, when the author had set aside his

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<sup>244</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 91.

<sup>245</sup> I will analyse all of these examples in detail within the coming chapters, especially in chapter 4.

<sup>246</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 72.

<sup>247</sup> Idem, 77.

<sup>248</sup> Idem, 78-79.

<sup>249</sup> Idem, p. 79.

<sup>250</sup> Idem, 81.

<sup>251</sup> Idem, 84.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Idem, 84-85.

<sup>254</sup> Idem, 88.

template, than in the ten years previously.<sup>255</sup> As if this was not enough, a monster suddenly appears and kills local peasants.<sup>256</sup> Finally, we witness a detailed sword fight between nobles in which the protagonist is hurt for the first time.<sup>257</sup> To sum it all up, the twelfth year's closing word is death (*marg*).<sup>258</sup> If we consider all of this, it becomes obvious that the recipient is thrown directly into the state of emergency at the very beginning of the second part of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*. Whether any of this really happened is an entirely different question and will be discussed in chapter 4. At this point, we have to answer the questions of *how*, *where*, and *why* our author placed his companion Muḥammad Ya'qūb into such an exotic setting while everything else is surrounded by total chaos und numerous threats.

If we contrast the peaceful anecdote in the melon garden and its successful and flowing action with the ruling family's settings and actions, which are characterised by chaos, betrayal, death, and destruction, we clearly see that there is a much deeper meaning behind this section. Musta'idd Ḥān not only wished to show how things really had occurred, which should have been his objective as a chronicler: he also wanted to demonstrate, through this clever combination of his independent action and natural settings, that he was distancing himself from the conflict-ridden ruling house by identifying with his friend's actions. If we note that the strength of Aurangzeb's orthodox principles increased from the beginning of the eleventh year, the author's companions appear to function as counter characters to the emperor's often doctrinaire tendencies. Therefore, Musta'idd Ḥān's detailed narration of the free and fast decision-making in this natural setting is in sharp contrast to the various martial actions of the courtly characters, which the author positioned around his calm anecdote.

It thus seems very likely that Musta'idd Ḥān's chosen setting for his companions forwards at least indirect criticism at the hustle and bustle of the royal household and the emperor's entourage, as he was distancing himself from the court's intrigues. This can be seen not only in the choice of the setting, but also through the help and solidarity of his companion Muḥammad Ya'qūb for the concerned Šihāb ad-Dīn. We find no such solidarity in the nobility; indeed, their relationships are exemplified by the sword fight in which Aurangzeb gets hurt, which occurs only two pages before the melon anecdote. In this context, it is also striking that Musta'idd Ḥān's companion does not need any direct support for his action from his superiors: he only sought the Khan's blessing. Given that the whole plan is based on

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<sup>255</sup> Idem, 73-74, 81., 87, 89,

<sup>256</sup> Idem, 74.

<sup>257</sup> Idem, 88-89.

<sup>258</sup> Idem, 94.



Muḥammad Ya‘qūb’s initiative, it is not surprising that we cannot find any verbs or adjectives describing movement on the Khan’s side.

We have already seen that the self-confidence of Musta‘idd Ḥān’s milieu had greatly increased at the time when he began writing. We should remember how Abū ‘l-Barakāt al-Lāhauri celebrated his companion Čandar-bhān Brahman, glorying him as the measure of all things without even mentioning the nobility or leading clergymen. In Europe at the same time, a similar idea can be seen in the notion of ‘genius’, whereby the bourgeois individual distinguished itself from the declining nobility through special acts and skills.<sup>259</sup> I argue that our author characterised his colleagues’ environment primarily through this collective confidence.

Furthermore, it is not only the setting’s function that is conspicuous: its symbolism is too. We have to ask ourselves *why* Musta‘idd Ḥān placed his companion in this specific setting and why the melon is the first fruit to be mentioned in the text. Focusing specifically on melons, watermelons, and cucumbers, Ralf Norrman and Jon Haarberg have argued in their study ‘that cucurbits generally have deep, profound, and complex multivocal symbolic associations with (...) fertility, vitality (...) creative power and rapid growth (...)’.<sup>260</sup> Bearing this in mind, let us now consider the cultural symbolism of the present setting to draw some conclusions. First of all, it is important to note that the melon does not have any negative connotations in either Islamic or Hindu culture, which corresponds with Norrmann and Haarberg’s statement. Rather, within the Islamic history of salvation, the melon (arab. *baṭṭiḥ*) has a truly peaceful meaning. In several *aḥādīṭ*, ‘Ā’iṣa (d. 678) and Muḥammad ‘Īsā at-Tirmidī (d. 825) often mention the prophet’s preference for melons, the fruit of paradise which contains a thousand blessings and a thousand mercies.<sup>261</sup> Additionally, we should assume that our author was aware of the fact that the melon plays an important role within the religious practices of the Hindus, sometimes as a substitute for animal sacrifices during processions.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> See Kordula and Susanne Kogler, *Autorenschaft, Genie, Geschlecht. Musikalische Schaffensprozesse von der Frühen Neuzeit bis zur Gegenwart*, Köln, 2013.

<sup>260</sup> See Ralf Norrman and Jon Haarberg, *Nature and Languages. A Semiotic Study of Cucurbits in Literature*, London, 1980, 16, quoted from Kenneth Kiple and Kriemhild Coneè (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Food*, Cambridge, 2000, <http://www.cambridge.org/us/books/kiple/cucumbers.htm>, last accessed 13/2/2013.

<sup>261</sup> Wassel Rasslan, *Mohammed und die Medizin nach den Überlieferungen*, Berlin, 1934, 36; Muhhammad Farooqi, *Medicinal Plants in the Traditions of Prophet Muḥammad. Medicinal, Aromatic and Food Plants Mentioned in the Traditions of Prophet Muḥammad*, Lucknow, 1998, 128.

<sup>262</sup> Lynn Foulston and Stuart Abbott, *Hindu Goddesses. Beliefs and Practices*, Brighton, 2009, 200-201.

Seventeenth-century persianised Kayastha and Khatri communities played an important role as ‘*middling groups*’ at the Mughal court, and we can safely assume that Musta‘idd Ḥān counted numerous persianised Hindus among his companions and friends:

(...) Many (among the intellectual and administrative elite at the Mughal court) were Hindus, usually Khatri, Kayasthas, or Brahmans. It has long been recognized that, over the centuries of Muslim rule in northern India, the frontiers of Persian came to extend far beyond the narrow circle of the emperor, the princes, and high nobles (...) <sup>263</sup> From the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the departments of accountancy (*siyāq*), draftmanship (*inshā’*), and the office of revenue minister (*dīwān*) were mostly filled by these Kayastha and Khatri *munshīs* and *muharris* (...). <sup>264</sup>

We should therefore bear in mind that the attention of the intended recipient and any persianised Hindus at court would catch this reference to melons when they were reading or listening to the text. We will see later that Musta‘idd Ḥān used other specific cultural symbols in his anecdotes to even address Shi’ite recipients. Here, I refer primarily to the argument of the authors of *Textures of Time*, who suggest that a constant connection between contemporary poets and their intended recipients existed which allowed the latter to understand the historiographical contents of prosaic texts. It seems appropriate therefore to consider that the same connection between our author and his intended recipient existed. This means that the latter most probably grasped the author’s allusions within his anecdotes (in the present case, the play with a culturally significant symbol like the melon).

Finally, the famous François Tavernier, a contemporary of our author, made an interesting observation. During his stay in Delhi (1663), he noted that the melon was indeed a symbol of truly distinguished persons, such as the companions with whom our author identified. They were only grown by the ‘wealthy people’ who used ‘imported seed’ to cultivate their melons. <sup>265</sup>

Before analysing the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*’s most prominent character, the protagonist Aurangzeb Alamgir himself, we will finally discuss in the following excursus a further peculiarity which Musta‘idd Ḥān initiated in the eleventh year. Once he finally put the *Ālamgīr-nāma* aside, he could finally start using his own confident style of storytelling,

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<sup>263</sup> Alam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 313.

<sup>264</sup> Idem, 314.

<sup>265</sup> See *Tavernier’s Travels in India. Being a Narrative of the Six Voyages of Jean-Baptiste Tavernier to the East, Especially to India between Years 1640 - 1676*, quoted from James Wescoat and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds.), *Mughal Gardens. Sources, Places, Representations, and Prospects*, Washington, 1996, 128.

which, as will be shown, differed sharply from the narration of the first ten years of the *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī*.

#### EXCURSUS: ON MUSTA'IDD ḤĀN'S STORYTELLING

From the beginning of the eleventh chapter, Musta'idd Ḥān portrays an extraordinarily dark and mysterious environment. From now on, environmental menaces and unedifying, mysterious threats increase considerably, and the first innocent civilians are attacked by devastating nature. While in the first ten years nature acted solely against the Mughals' imperial forces, Musta'idd Ḥān ceases to draw a distinction between them and common peasants: everyone remains defenceless against these various natural forces from the eleventh chapter onwards. Besides the several conflicts I listed above which Musta'idd Ḥān grouped around his melon setting, a major disaster occurs in the middle of the eleventh chapter: he mentions burning houses, lightning and thunder, and a mysterious gigantic figure who enters the setting to kill anyone barring his way.<sup>266</sup>

However, only a chapter later, we find ourselves in the *munšī*'s quiet and conflict-free garden, where our narrator quickly aids his friend's career. This setting truly remains an island of peace, since, only little later, Musta'idd Ḥān increases the text's drama by depicting a death caused by a goblin:

A basket fell into the well of the haveli (whereas) two men who successively descended to bring it up, died. A third shouted from midway 'Take me out!' After remaining unconscious for an hour, he recovered and said 'A dark goblin became visible before me at the bottom of the well and cried out (to me) in a terrible voice, 'Why are you coming? Get out.'<sup>267</sup>

The illustration of fantastic creatures and miraculous events within our historiographical text should not, however, be seen as contradicting the observable rational intentions which our author presented at the beginning of eleventh year. Rather, the mixing of rational-scientific intentions<sup>268</sup> with fantastic and fictional elements<sup>269</sup> was part of the repertoire of early modern chroniclers. Musta'idd Ḥān was not alone in guiding his recipients through the text in this particular way. Baḥtāvar Ḥān for example, our author's foster-father, writes in his *Mir'āt al-'ālam* about a tiny worm which, once it was in the vicinity of a human being, would devour

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<sup>266</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 74; I will discuss this section in detail below.

<sup>267</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 146-147; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 90.

<sup>268</sup> Idem, 69

<sup>269</sup> E.g. idem, 74.

itself entirely and then disappear immediately back into the woods.<sup>270</sup> Nīk Ra'ī, another contemporary of our author (born in May 1670), also describes the same shrine in the following words:

Near the shrine lay a garden inhabited by djinns and spirits (*asebzada*) whose conversations could be heard by mortals. They would climb up trees and generally create a ruckus. But those who were possessed by such spirits, especially women, could be cured by a visit to the garden. A further wonder of the place was that even were women hung upside down, their clothes remained more or less in place, preventing indecent exposure. This, Nek Rai assures us, is no fantasy.<sup>271</sup>

Before we enter the following chapters, it is important to understand that we are dealing here not only with a purely factual historical text: important parts of the text also show strong literary traits. Sarkar's summary of the *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī* that 'in many places it reads like a dry list of official postings and promotions as in our Government Gazettes'<sup>272</sup> might be accurate after a quick reading of the English translation which deleted nearly all of the author's poems, but certainly not when referring to the Persian edition. This specific method of storytelling was not limited to the Indo-Persian culture space, but was rather a truly global phenomenon in early modern times. In early modern Japan, for example, during the Tokugawa period (1603-1868), the function of narratives and historiography were strongly intertwined, since storytelling (*kōdan*) in novels and puppet plays was a way to educate Japanese people about history.<sup>273</sup> European scholars also argued that historians could learn a lot from novelists. Leibniz (died 1716), for example, favoured a little more romance 'in history'. Of course, there were also advocates of a strict separation of these two genres among early modern historians.<sup>274</sup> However, from Delhi to London, from Paris to Edo, it is very difficult to separate early modern historiography from storytelling. Even when some people aimed for factual authenticity, their works were still far from meeting a modern standard for scientific objectivity:

Wonders and monsters were a constant in European imagery until at least the Enlightenment: portents and prodigies moulded cosmographical concepts, helped to define the relationship

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<sup>270</sup> Flores, *Distant Wonders*, 574.

<sup>271</sup> Alam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 325.

<sup>272</sup> Sarkar, *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, vi.

<sup>273</sup> Masayuki Sato, 'A Social History of Historical Writing' in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, 80-102.

<sup>274</sup> See in detail Peter Burke, 'History, Myth, and Fiction: Doubts and Debates' in *ibid.*

between nature and medicine and (...) played a decisive role in the political debate and religious discourse of the age.<sup>275</sup>

If we consider this, it becomes clear that the present chronicle does not only focus on the historical reality of Aurangzeb's heroic deeds: the text equally provided space for Musta'idd Ḥān, his companions, and his patron 'Ināyat Allāh Ḥān to stage themselves. However, these short anecdotes and stories have been generally ignored in the previous research because they lack any historical facts. Nevertheless, it is precisely in these sections of the text that we realise the former author's intention, his individual literary techniques, the different levels of poeticity, and, above all, the text's tone and its normative meaning. Furthermore, the investigation of these long neglected sections enables us to analyse the emotions the author intended to evoke in his recipients. As will be shown, these neglected anecdotes play a decisive role in the next chapter, which analyses the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī's* setting.

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<sup>275</sup> Flores, *Distant Wonders*, 555-556.

## CONCLUSION

Musta‘idd Ḥān’s milieu was shaped by the fact that it yielded dazzling figures such as the Hindu Čandar-bhān Brahman (died ca. 1670), who recognised early on that the time of the military nobility was coming to its end, since other, rather different qualities would be required if the empire was to flourish. In the career and person of Čandar-bhān, the three essential aspects of our author’s milieu can be found. On the one hand, there was the strong Hindu and Muslim belief in a well-functioning Mughal meritocracy. In addition to their increased collective self-confidence and their belief in the Mughal meritocracy, our author’s milieu was characterised by a very high degree of tolerance. Ideally, anyone, whether Hindu or Muslim, could attain the highest positions so long as they demonstrated sufficient loyalty and competence.

As has been shown in the present chapter, all three tendencies (self-confidence, belief in meritocracy, and a high degree of cultural tolerance towards Hindus) appear in Musta‘idd Ḥān’s *Ma‘āşir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. The author’s self-confidence is visible in his surprising self-positioning in the text. He does this by deploying specific anecdotes, which at first seem to be historically irrelevant and therefore have been completely ignored by research. However, it is here that we recognise how keen Musta‘idd Ḥān was to take on the role of the protagonist, at least for a short time (e.g. in the mill anecdote). He also understood that he should save a prominent place for his friends at the beginning of the text’s second part, which he did by placing them in the exclusive setting of the melon garden.

In turn, the high tolerance of the *munşī* milieu is made apparent by the author’s numerous, although often cautious, attempts to demonstrate that many Hindus made common cause with the empire and brought forth loyal fighters who decisively contributed to its expansion. Musta‘idd Ḥān not only underlines this by exhibiting Aurangzīb’s alliance with the Hindus through the short sentence at the very beginning of the text, but also by using the vast majority of the chapters to report about the reward and promotion of loyal Hindus.

Finally, Musta‘idd Ḥān’s belief in the Mughal meritocracy, the third characteristic of his milieu, is shown immediately at the beginning of the text’s second half. Here it becomes clear that our author in no way wanted to be understood as a blind careerist who slavishly obeyed the whims of his ruler. Rather, this section proves that he must have been aware that he had been socialised in one of the most exclusive environments that the Mughal Empire had to offer. He was certainly not willing to accept any job immediately, regardless of how promising it might have sounded.

Bearing the high tolerance of the *munšī* milieu in mind, we should assume that our author had a very conflicted opinion about Aurangzīb's rule. However, this was not the only reason for him to be circumspect with regard to the previous reign: the times could not have been worse for Musta'idd Hān to design a hymn of praise for Aurangzīb. Here the author's complicated *Sitz im Leben* comes into play. As soon as Musta'idd Hān took up his pen in 1707 to start his work on the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, the most violent crisis for decades broke out and unsettled the empire. For all of this, his protagonist was not entirely innocent, a fact of which Musta'idd Hān must have been aware. In this sense, Musta'idd Hān was simply not able to constantly glorify Aurangzīb's actions, since his successor Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur, the text's intended recipient, now had to deal with the consequences of his predecessor's mistakes. Considering all of this, we should expect a text which overflows with criticisms of Aurangzīb; however, this is not the case. So how did Musta'idd Hān handle this tricky situation?

First and foremost, the author's own career should be cited as a possible reason for why he experienced Aurangzīb as flexible ruler rather than as a continually violent tyrant. From 1685, Musta'idd Hān had the exclusive right to be allowed to continue his work as one of the only sanctioned chroniclers after so many celebrities had failed certainly meant that Musta'idd Hān did not perceive Aurangzīb as a despot whom he sought to constantly criticise in his official chronicle.

Of course, the author's intended recipient Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur also played an important role in the formation of the text after he took over the empire in 1707 as the new ruler in Delhi and Agra. At first sight, he would have been the first to accept a chronicle in which his father was taken to task for his errors. As his son and successor, he came to the throne at the venerable age of 64. From the very beginning of his reign, he constantly had to struggle with the numerous crises which broke out after the death of his predecessor, who was certainly not blameless for their outbreak. However, constant harsh criticism would not be appropriate in such an important text, which stood in the long tradition of official Mughal chronicles. Nor could such criticism be expressed directly: the new ruler was committed to the norms of his heritage.

However, the most important factor which prevented constant criticism of Aurangzīb in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* was the chronicle's patron, the influential 'Ināyat Allāh Hān. He had been a hawk during Aurangzīb's reign and remained a decisive actor afterwards: he was a strong force behind the reintroduction of *ḡizya* in 1679, certainly one of the most controversial decisions in Aurangzīb's lifetime. Therefore, it seems probable to me that it was

actually 'Ināyat Allāh Ḥān who insisted that clear anti-Hindu passages had to be placed in the text, since this was a policy with which he had identified throughout his life.

Nonetheless, the chronicle is full of indirect criticism of unprovoked violence against the Hindus, as we saw in several anecdotes where the author suggested alternatives for a new policy in the post-Aurangzīb era. So how can we explain the contradictions of the text?

This dichotomy, which is a crucial characteristic of the text, has so far only been used by academic researchers to describe this text and its author as being inferior in terms of their quality. I argue, however, that this dichotomy in fact offers a great opportunity for an alternative interpretation. The *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* should be considered less as a backward-looking chronicle and more as a mirror for its time of origin, the interesting period of transition immediately after Aurangzīb's death (1707-1710), which, as we know, was marked by terrible crises. In that sense, we need to understand the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* as a fluid text which the author, in order to not completely alienate Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur, cautiously shaped so as to fit the latter's constantly changing operations. A good example is the totally unexpected appearance of the twelve courageous Mughal warriors, whose fate strongly reminds one of the twelve šī'it imams. On the one hand, the author skilfully works with important symbols in order to win the attention of influential šī'it recipients for his text: the latter gained power only shortly after the death of Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur in 1712, meaning that they had been able to expand their networks at court during Musta'idd Ḥān's writing process. Most importantly, however, this brief anecdote about the brave twelve Mughal warriors was actually Musta'idd Ḥān's cautious and indirect response to Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur's approach to the Šī'its. In 1709, just as Musta'idd Ḥān was in the middle of writing his chronicle, the new ruler suddenly decided to give significant concessions to the Šī'its by ordering that the Friday prayer in Lahore was to be held in the šī'it's manner (something which would have been impossible under Aurangzīb).

It is in these very short anecdotes, which are sprinkled throughout the text, that we witness Musta'idd Ḥān's endeavours to react to Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur's political decisions in a prudent manner, as he did not know if his recipient would switch course later on. In fact, this is exactly what happened in the case of Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur's approach to the Šī'its. Shortly before his death in 1711, Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur had to personally face the fierce criticism which his decision had caused when he went to Lahore to have intensive talks with Sunni intellectuals there. In this sense, these sections of the text, which certainly seem contradictory and unimportant at first glance, should not be stamped as historically irrelevant. Rather, they



bear witness to the author's need to respond in a variety of ways to the new ruler's frequently fickle policies. These passages often contain numerous symbols, which, understandably, have no meaning for untrained readers of the English translation of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*. However, they were of great importance to contemporaneous recipients: if we are to follow the argumentation in the influential study *Textures of Time*, these individuals most certainly understood such symbolic references. Therefore, a detailed analysis of these dichotomous sections and with their unique symbols allows us to look behind the text and thus better understand the text's social energy, the author's former intentions, and his highly skilled narrative strategy.



# CHAPTER 2: THE ANALYSIS OF THE SETTING AND THE MUGHAL PERMANENT STATE OF EMERGENCY

## SECTION 1: THE DANGEROUS SETTINGS

*The (Mughal) soldiers had worked that much and suffered as well - now, they were (also) shaken in mind by the fear of dying in such a terrible country. - Mustai'dd Hān.<sup>276</sup> - Mustai'dd Hān.*

### PRELUDE

In one of his recent studies on the analysis of the narrative of the New Testament, James Resseguie<sup>277</sup> defines the setting as follows: '(The) setting is the background against which the narrative takes place. It may be a physical, social-cultural, temporal, or religious environment.<sup>278</sup> A setting may thus be geographical (Delhi, Goa, Tibet, or the Deccan), topographical (mountain, sea, desert, river), religious (ramadān, 'Īdu l-Fiṭr), or architectural (Aurangzīb's court, a royal garden, a mosque, a temple, or a shrine). It may be social or cultural (Muslim, gentile, Brahman), political (disputations between generals, the royal tent, a banquet), temporal (night, day, 40 days, a millennium), or spatial (heaven, earth, abyss). Minor characters, whom Seymour Chatman calls 'walk ons',<sup>279</sup> may also be part of the setting (crowd, soldiers, peasants): '(The) Setting contributes to the mood of the narrative, or delineates the traits of a character, or contributes to the development of plot of conflicts (...) The Setting may highlight the religious, moral, social, emotional, and spiritual values of the characters (...) (it) may develop a character's mental, emotional, or spiritual landscape; it may be symbolic of choices to be made; it provides structure to the story and may develop the central conflict in the narrative.'<sup>280</sup>

For quite a long time, this specific analysis of the setting did not attract much attention; however, within the scope of the 'spatial turn',<sup>281</sup> it has become an increasing focus of

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<sup>276</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 43-44; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 27.

<sup>277</sup> James Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament. An Introduction*, Grand Rapids, 2005.

<sup>278</sup> The following definition is taken from Resseguie: I have only changed the examples within the brackets for a better understanding, idem, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 87 ff.

<sup>279</sup> Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse. Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, Ithaca, 1993, 19.

<sup>280</sup> Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 88.

<sup>281</sup> See Jörg Döring, et. al., (ed.), *Spatial Turn. Das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften*, Bielefeld, 2008; Wolfgang Hallet, et al., (eds.), *Raum und Bewegung in der Literatur. Die Literaturwissenschaften und der Spatial Turn*, Bielefeld, 2009; Sigrid Weigel, 'Zum 'topographical turn'.

interest. This has occurred because such analysis is not only crucial for the historical-cultural interpretation of the text and the author's world,<sup>282</sup> but also because it contributes to a better understanding of the notion of the normative text or, in other words, the text's social energy.<sup>283</sup> The setting of the narrative is often structured in the form of contrasts (e.g. up/down, house/forest educated/uneducated, hostile/friendly, etc.)<sup>284</sup> and borders, be they spatial, social, or religious. Often, the figures of a narrative meet insurmountable barriers.<sup>285</sup> These barriers can limit the plot of the narrative (e.g. the poor remain poor), but may also provoke conflicts. If such a conflict happens and the established order is questioned (e.g. a poor person penetrates into the world of the rich and perhaps remains there), then this can be considered an event under the classic definition provided by Jurij Lotman.<sup>286</sup>

The present analysis will start with the dangerous settings. The borders of these settings are generally insurmountable for the Mughal characters and they are therefore crucial for the text's atmosphere.<sup>287</sup> The following examples will show to what extent the author utilised tension<sup>288</sup> and surprise<sup>289</sup> to cleverly create sympathy<sup>290</sup> for the characters in the recipient.

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Kartographie, Topographie und Raumkonzepte in den Kulturwissenschaften' in *KulturPoetik* vol. 2, no. 2, 2002, 151-165.

<sup>282</sup> A detailed investigation of the setting enables us to collect in detail parts of the former intended recipient's historical 'prior-knowledge'. John Darr defines this prior knowledge as 'Extratext': 'The Extratext is made up of all the skills and knowledge that readers of a particular culture are expected to possess in order to read competently: (1) language; (2) social norms and cultural scripts; (3) classical or canonical literature, (4) literary conventions (e.g. genres, type scenes, standard plots, stock characters) and reading rules (e.g. how to categorize, rank, and process various kinds of textual data); and (5) commonly-known historical and geographical facts'; John Darr, *On Character Building. The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts*, Louisville, 1992, 22; see also Finner, *Narratologie*, 51, footnote 120.

<sup>283</sup> In a new light, representatives of the 'New Historicism' question the way literary texts relate to their historical environment. This relationship is longer solely one of the opus and its background but rather, by referring to the theory of intertextuality, that of the text to all other texts in its specific culture. Thus, a text is no longer seen as a singular aesthetic unit, but as a cultural hub in which several discourses overlap. In this context, texts are charged with social energy, generating resonance effects within their cultural environment. In very different ways, a literary text can grasp topics from its time and cultural and give them back again. The text therefore belongs in a network of social circulation, or so the argument goes. On the 'New Historicism' see primarily H. Aram Veaser (ed.): *The New Historicism*, New York, 1989; Moritz Baßler (ed.), *New Historicism. Literaturgeschichte als Poetik der Kultur*, Tübingen, 1995; Jürg Glauser and Annegret Heitmann (ed.), *Verhandlungen mit dem New Historicism. Das Text-Kontext-Problem in der Literaturwissenschaft*, Würzburg, 1999; Stephen Greenblatt, et al.: *Practicing New Historicism*. Chicago, 2000.

<sup>284</sup> Within the field of theatre studies, these aspects are already well defined, namely in terms of the classification of narrative figures according to their ability or inability to cross these borders. See Gerhard Hoffmann, *Raum, Situation, erzählte Wirklichkeit: poetologische und historische Studien zum englischen und amerikanischen Roman*, Stuttgart, 1978, 591-595.

<sup>285</sup> Manfred Frank, 'Grenze/Grenzziehung', in *Metzler Lexikon Literatur-und Kulturtheorie. Ansätze - Personen - Grundbegriffe*, Stuttgart/Weimar, 2008.

<sup>286</sup> See Jurij Lotman, *Die Struktur literarischer Texte*, Munich, 1972, 334.

<sup>287</sup> Finner, *Narratologie*, 82 ff.; Jurij Lotman, *Die Struktur literarischer Texte*, 311-329.

<sup>288</sup> Peter Wenzel, 'Zur Analyse der Spannung' in idem, (ed.), *Einführung in die Erzähltextanalyse. Kategorien, Modelle, Probleme*, Trier, 2004; Martin Baisch, 'Vorausdeutungen. Neugier und Spannung im höfischen Roman', in *Historische Narratologie, mediävistische Perspektiven*, ed. Harald Haferland, et al., Berlin, 2010, 205-230, especially 222 f.

We will also seek to answer the questions of where and why the author put a specific setting into the text.<sup>291</sup> The second part of the analysis involves the peaceful settings. While these are far fewer in number, they nevertheless fulfil a vital function in the story, especially when read in direct connection with the more detailed threatening settings.

The present section will show how our author structured his text and thoughtfully arranged it by pursuing a deliberate narrative strategy. Both settings, the dangerous and the peaceful ones, played a crucial role in portraying the narrative's protagonist Aurangzīb as the text's main victim and enabled the author to justify and condone his controversial political decisions.

## SETTING I: THE JUNGLE, THE RIVER, AND THE NIGHT

### PRELUDE

In September 1657, a war of succession broke out between Šāh Ġāhān's (gov. 1628-1658) two sons, Aurangzīb and Dārā (1615-1659), paving the way for a classic fraternal conflict. Dārā Šukūh was the eldest son of Šāh Ġāhān and his second beloved wife Mumtāz Maḥal Dārā (died 1631). From his early youth, Dārā showed great interest in the spiritual dimensions of Islām and Hinduism. He was strongly convinced that mystical experiences enable the seeker to attest to the oneness of God and the unity of existence behind the variety of outward manifestations.<sup>292</sup> Supported by Muslim and Hindu scholars, he authored several books: the most prominent among them was the *Maḡma' al-Baḡrayn* (*The Mingling of the Two Oceans*).<sup>293</sup> The title 'Two Oceans' referred to Islāmic Šūfī teaching and Vedantic thought as contained in the Upanishadic texts of the Hindu tradition.<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> See Horace Abbot, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, Cambridge, 2003, 51-61. Abbot discusses in detail the importance of playing with the addressee's expectations with 'suspense' and 'surprise', 51-61.

<sup>290</sup> Habicht, *Sympathienlenkung in den Dramen Shakespeares*.

<sup>291</sup> Sabine Buchholz and Manfred Jahn, 'Space in Narrative' in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, eds. David Herman, Marie-Laure Ryan, and Manfred Jahn, London, 2005; see Finnnern, *Narratologie*, 79.

<sup>292</sup> Satish Chandra, 'Dārā Shukōh', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, third edition, Brill Online, 2012, <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/dara-shukoh-SIM>, last accessed 31/08/2012, 1711; Lalita Sengupta, *Contribution of Darashikō to Hindu-Muslim Philosophy*, Calcutta, 2004; Daryush Shayegan, *Les relations de l'Hindouisme et du Soufisme d'après le Majma' al-Bahrayn de Dārā Shokūh*. Paris, 1979; Erhard Göbel-Groß, *Sirr-i Akbar. Die persische Upanisadenübersetzung des Moḡulprinzen Dārā Šukoh. Eine Untersuchung der Übersetzungsmethode u. Textauswahl nebst Text des Prāsna-Upaniṣad Sanskrit-Persisch-Deutsch*, Marburg, 1962.

<sup>293</sup> Daryush Shayegan, *Hindouisme et Soufisme. Une lecture du Confluent des Deux Océans, le Majma'al-Bahrayn de Dārā Shokūh*, Paris, 1997.

<sup>294</sup> Sengupta, *Contribution*; Shayegan, *Les relations de l'Hindouisme et du Soufisme*; Erhard Göbel-Groß, *Sirr-i Akbar*.

In 1656, just two years before the war of succession broke out, Dārā went even further and proclaimed a monistic unity between Islām and Hinduism, as well as other religions. Since their father declined in health and the two brothers drifted further and further apart, he translated 52 Upanishads into Persian with the help of some Brahmins. In these writings, he perceived the same transcendental unity of the absolute as known from the Qur’ān. However, as the classic narrative goes, Dārā was now confronted by the young Aurangzīb, a ruthless, ascetic, and tight-lipped orthodox Muslim whose principal aim was to impose Islām on India.

This narrative has consistently remained in use across the centuries. In 1844, for example, William Sleeman moaned: ‘Poor Dārā!...thy generous heart and enlightened mind had reigned over this vast empire, and made it, perchance, the garden it deserves to be made.’<sup>295</sup> In 2004, Abraham Eraly concluded that ‘India was at a crossroads in the mid-seventeenth century; it had the potential of moving forward with Dārā, or of turning back to medievalism with Aurangzīb.’<sup>296</sup> Interestingly, many standard German historical works on early modern India refer to this orthodox interpretation by repeatedly describing Aurangzīb as a brutal and narrow-minded opponent of the Mughals’ last hope.<sup>297</sup>

Meanwhile, Šāh Ġāhān recovered enough from his illness to become a strong factor in the struggle for succession. However, despite his support for his eldest son, Dārā was defeated by Aurangzīb during the decisive Battle of Samugarh on 30 May 1658. Aurangzīb’s first coronation on 21 July 1658, almost immediately after the battle was won, was a rather unspectacular improvisation. The newly crowned emperor, together with his leading generals Amīr al-‘Umarā’, Šaysta Ḥān, and Shaiḥ Mīr, started to chase Dārā. It is at this point where we will begin to look closely at the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*.

We will first consider an excerpt from the text’s first half, one which already includes the essential parts of the author’s narrative strategy. In the subsequent analysis, this excerpt will be compared to other prominent Mughal chronicles and poems. In this way, the author’s individual style stands out particularly well, and we will see that Musta‘idd Ḥān designed these settings in a way that perfectly fitted his very individual narrative strategy.

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<sup>295</sup> William Sleeman, *Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official*, London, 1844, 272.

<sup>296</sup> Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal Throne. The Saga of India’s Great Emperors*, London, 2004, 336.

<sup>297</sup> For example Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Entzauberung Asiens. Europa und die asiatischen Reiche im 18. Jahrhundert*, Munich, 1998, 272-273; Dietmar Rothermund, *Geschichte Indiens. Vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, Munich, 2002, 44.

## THE JUNGLE

The morning before the imperial army started towards the Punjab, Aurangzīb ‘ordered his tents to be pitched outside.’<sup>298</sup> Shortly afterwards, the imperialists continued their organised march and crossed the River Satlej, whereas ‘(...) Sulaymān Shūkūh (Dārā’s son) fled into the hills of Kaśmīr and so the Emperor ordered the force sent against him to return.’<sup>299</sup> The pursuit of Dārā then continued:

Dārā pushed forward (...) but left his heavy baggage in the fort (...) and the rest of his treasures and property in (his) boats while he himself was travelling through the jungles (after) Dawd Ḥān and other leaders among his followers had deserted him. Dārā now wanted to go to (...) towards Qandahār, but at the desertion of his followers and the refusal of his woman he had gone to Thatta (...).<sup>300</sup>

Now, for the first time, something unexpected happens. The generally well-informed, organised, and successful generals of Aurangzīb made a mistake:

Dārā’s boats advanced and opposed the arrival of the boats which accompanied Sāf Šīkan. The latter sent a message to Muḥammad Šāliḥ that he should send boats from that side and also to oppose Dārā. But Muḥammad Šāliḥ was not divinely guided (...) and a splendid victory was frustrated through Muḥammad Šāliḥ’s dubble-dealing.<sup>301</sup>

First of all, and not surprisingly, Musta‘idd Ḥān creates a strong dualism between the two main opponents, Aurangzīb and Dārā. This dualism is illustrated, among many other examples, by the figures’ relation to the setting and their place within it.<sup>302</sup> In the present chapter, I will show precisely to what extent the author designed the setting to be a crucial tool in his narrative strategy, starting with the narrative’s protagonist.

Within the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, Aurangzīb generally resides in spaces that have been subjugated, cultivated, and built by humans, as he embodies the civilising element among the narrative’s characters. In the present case, his royal tent is his residence (‘he ordered to pitch his tents outside’).<sup>303</sup> Generally, Aurangzīb’s settings are fortresses,<sup>304</sup> cities,<sup>305</sup> and houses of befriended high nobles.<sup>306</sup> While he himself orders the construction of roads,<sup>307</sup> it is Dārā who

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<sup>298</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 10/11.

<sup>299</sup> Idem,

<sup>300</sup> Idem, 16. Sarkar, *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 8.

<sup>301</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 17; Sarkar, *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 9.

<sup>302</sup> Manfred Frank, Art. *Grenze/Grenzziehung*.

<sup>303</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 10/11.

<sup>304</sup> Idem, e.g. 93.

<sup>305</sup> Idem, e.g. 113.

<sup>306</sup> Idem, e.g. 51.

closes<sup>308</sup> them and thus extinguishes the function of this civilisational setting; even if the latter uses a road, he does so only by night or in order to escape from his younger brother.<sup>309</sup> Dārā therefore occupies the uncivilised, disorganised, and dark settings of the narrative, which are consequently subdued and eradicated by Aurangzīb. Specifically, the author points out that Dārā goes into the jungle during his escape: ‘(...) *he stepped into the wilderness*.’<sup>310</sup> For Dārā and his entourage (as well as for Aurangzīb’s enemies in general), only the night,<sup>311</sup> the rivers,<sup>312</sup> the mountains,<sup>313</sup> the jungle,<sup>314</sup> and the wilderness<sup>315</sup> are left.

There are only three examples to be found where Dārā stays in a cultivated setting, and it is striking that two of them are dramatic moments for him. The first one is his catastrophic defeat at the Battle of Samurgah (29 May 1658) against his outnumbered younger brother. Here, the battle’s ending delivers a rather short but remarkable observation: ‘(...) after his flight, he arrived at his house in Agra (...)’ Shortly afterwards, in a moment filled with symbolic importance, Aurangzīb occupies this space, which had been built by Dārā’s men beforehand: ‘(...) He (Aurangzīb) reached the camp and stood Dārā’s tent, which was (still) standing.’<sup>316</sup> Finally, Dārā entered a cultivated setting in summer 1659 for the last time in his life: Bahādur Ḥān brought ‘(...) Dārā Shukoh to the exalted court. He was kept in the palace of Ḥizirabad. On 2 August 1659, he was executed and buried in Humāyūn’s tomb.’<sup>317</sup>

We see that the author admitted Dārā into no peaceful cultivated settings within the text. Aurangzīb’s brother enters his house only for a very short period of time; equally, Aurangzīb occupies the tent immediately after his brother’s defeat. In addition, the fact that the tent was still standing is emphasised, thus showing how hastily Dārā retreated from the battle. The author also emphasises that Dārā’s final scene, his execution, was in a setting which he had never before entered in the text: a palace. The author effectively placed Aurangzīb’s antagonist in unkempt settings which the cultivated Dārā would have found utterly uncomfortable.

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<sup>307</sup> Idem, e.g. 42.

<sup>308</sup> Idem, e.g. 4.

<sup>309</sup> Idem, e.g. 8.

<sup>310</sup> Idem, e.g. 19.

<sup>311</sup> Idem, e.g. 45.

<sup>312</sup> See also, in addition to Dārā’s aforementioned escape by boat, the use of a large flotilla by the Assamese. idem, 64.

<sup>313</sup> Idem, 19.

<sup>314</sup> Idem, 17.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Idem, 7.

<sup>317</sup> Dara’s execution will be analysed in detail in the chapter on the art of compilation.





## EXCURSUS

In terms of Mughal history, and indeed Islamic history in general, there is no cultural-historical analysis of the forest or the jungle available.<sup>318</sup> Therefore, my ideas are primarily based on European research. The following brief excursus concerning the cultural and historical importance of the forest and wilderness in European history will illustrate why such an interrogation in this particular setting within an Indo-Persian chronicle makes sense.

When we look at pre-modern European texts, the function of the forest is very contradictory: it can either be a gloomy or graceful place.<sup>319</sup> The wild forest often appeared as a nocturnal place of horror, mostly populated by menacing demonic beings, wild animals, poisonous snakes, and the benighted rabble. On the other hand, the forest served as a freely chosen retreat from everyday life for social dropouts, such as the escapist hermit. It also acted as a place of challenge for knights during their adventures. Similarly, the forest functions as a refuge for people excluded and banned from life, like heretics, outlaws (noble robbers such as Robin Hood, for example), and innocent persecuted women (Genevieve of Brabant).<sup>320</sup> Furthermore, as a bastion of freedom and independence in harmony with nature, the forest was part of utopian thinking in the early modern period.<sup>321</sup>

## END OF THE EXCURSUS

Musta‘idd Hān. did not design such a diverse image of the wildernesses. Throughout the whole text, the latter constructed a consistent dichotomy in which only the protagonist’s enemies entered into this setting. Phrases such as ‘The enemy finding the road closed by this measure, fled to the jungle and hid themselves under the trees’<sup>322</sup> are typical of this kind of description of the wilderness as the setting of enemies.<sup>323</sup>

Throughout the text, Aurangzīb and his entourage never enter the wild jungle and the dark forests voluntarily, and only favour light, civilised, and cultivated settings. This negative

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<sup>318</sup> Regarding an environmental history of the Indian forest under the Mughals see: Sumit Guha, ‘The Central Indian Forest from Mughal Suzerainty to British Control’ in *Cambridge Studies in Indian History and Society*, 1999 (4), 108-129.

<sup>319</sup> Ulrich Mattejiet, *Wald. B. Literarische und kulturgeschichtliche Bedeutung*, in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. VIII., Munich, 2002, 1944-1946.

<sup>320</sup> Konrad Vanja, *Genovefa von Brabant*, in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vol. 5, Berlin, 1003-1009.

<sup>321</sup> Charles Young, *The Royal Forests of Medieval England*, Philadelphia, 1979; Werner Rösener, *Bauern im Mittelalter*, Munich, 1987; Joachim Allmann, *Der Wald in der Frühen Neuzeit. Eine mentalitäts- und sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchung am Beispiel des Pfälzer Raumes 1500-1800*, Berlin, 1989; Elisabeth Vavra (ed.), *Der Wald im Mittelalter. Funktion - Nutzung - Deutung*, Berlin, 2008.

<sup>322</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 181.

<sup>323</sup> For a similar description please see idem, 10, 18, 181, 285, 448, 451, 478, 483.

description of the forest and wild nature is not the norm in Indo-Persian texts. In the writing of Musta‘idd Ḥān’s prominent predecessor Abū l-Faḏl, we read in numerous places about the ‘(...) wonderful country of hills and forests’<sup>324</sup> and that ‘there were wonderful hills clothed with forests.’<sup>325</sup> Later, at the end of the eighteenth century, the Iranian-born scholar Ḥusain ‘Alī Khān Kirmānī cannot find words to describe the beauty of the wilderness in his famous history of Ṭīpū Sulṭān (died 1799): ‘What can I say of this wonderful wilderness - the pen trembles at its mention alone.’<sup>326</sup> Sa‘īd Ḡulām Ḥusayn Ḥān (1727-1789), in his *Sā‘ig al-Muta’ḥḥirūn*, went into raptures upon viewing a wonderful forest: ‘The horizon is bounded by a forest of beautiful lofty trees, that extend as far as the eye can reach, and line the bottom and sides of a chain of high mountains that seem to reach the very sky.’<sup>327</sup>

By comparing these diverse descriptions of prominent Muslim authors in Mughal India with our text, we recognise the author’s personal touch. In describing the wilderness in a gloomy way, Musta‘idd Ḥān successfully substantiated the text’s permanent state of emergency and the bulk of his narrative strategy. As will be shown in the next section, this was by no means the last setting which the author describes as dangerous, which further distinguishes his text from those of other contemporary writers.

#### THE RIVER AND THE MUGHALS’ DISCIPLINING OF NATURE

While Aurangzīb was victorious on land against his brother Dārā at Samurgah, the following attempt of Aurangzīb’s general Saif Šikan Ḥān to ‘(...) bar the path of (Dārā’s) treasure boats (...)’<sup>328</sup> was not granted success. Šikan Ḥān only ‘(...) wished to cross the river and attack the enemy’.<sup>329</sup> In contrast, Dārā not only used the river and boats to his strategic advantage, but also used the hills, stepping into yet another setting constantly shunned by imperial troops.<sup>330</sup>

When Dārā, again escaped final arrest, Šikan Ḥān was forced to pursue him cautiously within two days’ marching distance. Dārā winds directly over the hills and rivers, whereas his pursuer appears to be in very uncomfortable terrain, meandering slowly along the water. Only after a great delay did he manage to cross the river, and he was still behind Dārā: ‘In short,

<sup>324</sup> Beveridge, *The Akbarnama of Abūl-Faḏl*, vol.ume 2, 353.

<sup>325</sup> Idem, *The Akbarnama of Abūl-Faḏl*, vol.ume 3, 817.

<sup>326</sup> Ḥusain ‘Alī Khān Kirmānī, *The History of Hydur Naik*, trans. by William Miles, London, 1842, 92.

<sup>327</sup> Haji Mustapha (trans.), *A Translation of the Sēir Mutaqharin or View of Modern times. Being an History of India, from the Year 1118 to the Year 1195*, 4. vol., repr. Calcutta, 1902-1903, vol. 2, 83.

<sup>328</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 16

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

<sup>330</sup> This part will be analysed in more detail in the third setting.

Dārā crossed the low hill of Siwistan, and Sāf Šīkan marched two stages in pursuit of him on that very side of the river.<sup>331</sup>

This excerpt from the chronicle's beginning is not an exception: there are only two sections in the chronicle where Mughal troops successfully cross the rivers.<sup>332</sup> However, this does not mean that they felt comfortable in doing so, even if they chose this setting for their operations voluntarily. The crossing of rivers rather shows that this specific setting was generally avoided by Aurangzīb's troops, especially since rivers were left behind as quickly as possible. I argue that the river crossing should be seen as a subjugation of this space, as Musta'idd Hān places a strong emphasis on the fact that Aurangzīb and his entourage managed to tame nature's strength instead of being subjected to it. For example, after Šīkan Hān failed to cross the river to finally catch Dārā, he handled it successfully on the next attempt. The author emphasises the fact that he constructed a bridge in only seven days: 'Sāf Šīkan Hān crossed the river by building a bridge in seven days'.<sup>333</sup> This disciplining of untamed nature, which is used by the author to highlight the dichotomy between the civilised Mughals and their cultivated settings and their barbarian enemies and primitive settings, is visible throughout the whole chronicle. However, as Gommans shows, our text is far from exceptional in this respect:

We come across jungle-clearing and road-levelling activities throughout the other Mughal chronicles, especially in those areas that were unfit for large-scale operations of the imperial army, such as along the Western Ghats and into Gondwana or Orissa, and in such places "where there was no path through it, but the coming and going of the army formed a track".<sup>334</sup>

We should draw a parallel in this matter between the period of our text and modern Europe.<sup>335</sup> For example, Zygmunt Bauman's<sup>336</sup> important observations on the tension between nature and modernity can each be applied to our text, its culture, and its time:

(F)or Bauman the natural in modernity is an externalized 'other', disordered and ambiguous, culture's discursive antithesis. As a consequence, while modernity has been uniquely self-conscious of its alienation from the natural it has also been uniquely capable of the control of

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<sup>331</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 17.

<sup>332</sup> Idem, 17, 487.

<sup>333</sup> Idem, 18.

<sup>334</sup> Jos Gommans, *Mughal Warfare. Indian Frontiers and Highroads to Empire, 1500-1700*, London, 2002, 106.

<sup>335</sup> See Thomas Leinkauf (ed.), *Der Naturbegriff in der Frühen Neuzeit. Semantische Perspektiven zwischen 1500 und 1700*, Berlin, 2005.

<sup>336</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, Cambridge, 1991.

nature.<sup>337</sup>

The closer we come to the end of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, the more the civilised Mughals perceive their environment as the uncivilised and hostile 'Other'. Rivers increasingly overrun their banks, resulting in numerous deaths:

At this time owing to excess of rain the river Manjera raged in a flood. No provision could come from the neighbourhood. Famine prevailed; wheat, pulse, and rice disappeared. Cries of grief at the disappearance of grain rose from the famished on all sides of the camp. Of the men of Haidarabad, not a soul remained alive.<sup>338</sup>

Importantly, the more dangerous the setting appears at the chronicle's end, the more the Mughals extend their repressive measures against uncivilised locals. Here, these disciplinary measures are often mixed with unusual depictions of violence against the civilian population. Given that, in the first half of our text, the author meticulously ensured that the protagonist was solely concerned for the people's welfare,<sup>339</sup> these disciplinary measures against nature are striking, since they simultaneously include an excess of violence against the local population which can be summarised as a policy of scorched earth:

Bidār Baht (...) had conquered many of the infidels' fort and only in a short time (...) He burned many villages and *wādīs* on the way (and) the inhabitants' arrogant heads (...) were trampled by the war horses of the imperial army.<sup>340</sup>

In this quote, the author does not see a difference between dangerous and turbulent nature and the locals; instead, he drew an equivalence between the setting and the local characters. In doing so, Musta'idd Ḥān reflected the empire's overstretch: the present scene took place in 1701, a period of a deep structural crisis in the empire. Furthermore, this description of events in Aurangzīb's forty-fifth year of reign is distinctive because we cannot find a similarly detailed description of punishment against locals in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*'s first part. Here, at the chronicle's end, the permanent state of emergency had reached such proportions that the entire setting and all characters are potentially threatening. This tendency continues: at the end of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, the natural settings are like a meat grinder, dragging thousands of Mughals, regardless of their class, to death.<sup>341</sup> The highlight of this kind of description is

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<sup>337</sup> Stuart Oliver, 'The Thames Embankment and the Disciplining of Nature in Modernity' in *The Geographical Journal*, vol. 166, no. 3 (2000), 227-238, 227.

<sup>338</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 291-292 and for similar descriptions see 387-388 ff., 427, 429, 431, 466-467.

<sup>339</sup> Idem, 43, 41, 89.

<sup>340</sup> Idem, 448.

<sup>341</sup> See, e.g., idem, 463 - 468.

certainly Aurangzīb's journey from Saḥarlanā to Bahādurgah in June 1702: this section details the never-ending ordeal of the Mughals for nearly four pages.<sup>342</sup> This specific type of writing uses river and water settings in particular: these act like a vortex and a constant threat to the imperial troops and their expansion.<sup>343</sup> These water settings generally appear as a direct threat to the Mughals and the locals, mainly through the deadly flooding they cause:

It took the form of the outbreak of a second flood of *Nūh* (Noah) (...) Owing to the heavy rains (...) a terrible flood swept all down (...), killing the people. No one was brave enough to look at it, while every moment the (...) violence and wildness increased.<sup>344</sup>

Furthermore, Musta'idd Ḥān designed the water as the preferred setting for enemies, since they held it gave them a strategic advantage. This can already be seen in the chronicle's first pages during the pursuit of Dārā. Within only two pages,<sup>345</sup> we read seven times (!) that Dārā used his boats specifically for his flight and to stow his treasures: he thus voluntarily entered the water. In contrast, the protagonist only enters a boat four times in more than 500 pages.<sup>346</sup> He never does so in military contexts, but for representative purposes and for short trips. Equally, the strategic use of the rivers is not limited only to Dārā, since other enemies of Aurangzīb used large fleets to attack the empire: '(...) the wretched Assamese had a second time audaciously crossed their own frontier and attacked Gauāhati on the boundary of Bengal, with a vast army and a large flotilla.'<sup>347</sup>

Why exactly the author decided to have the protagonist and his troops avoid the river so consistently should be attributed to his consciously employed narrative strategy. There was no historical need to portray rivers, the sea, and ships<sup>348</sup> as no-go areas for Mughal troops during Aurangzīb's reign, as Gommans shows:

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<sup>342</sup> Idem, 463-466.

<sup>343</sup> For example, see the very intensive descriptions on pages Idem, 387-389, 426, 467,

<sup>344</sup> Idem, 387-388, I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*. For more drastic narratives about the flood, see 291, 387, 388, 426, 429, 431, 466, 467.

<sup>345</sup> Idem, 16-17.

<sup>346</sup> Idem, 54, 87, 128, 154 (e.g. '*he alighted from the boat*').

<sup>347</sup> Idem, 64., see also 11, 21, 25, 224.

<sup>348</sup> A targeted analysis using Michel Foucault's approach to describe the ships as '*l'hétérotopie par excellence*' would be very productive for the era and culture under discussion in this thesis. Foucault argues that, from the sixteenth century onwards, the ship was not only the main instrument for economic development in Europe, but also the largest reservoir for fantasies. The question now arises of how it looked from the Mughal perspective. See Michel Foucault, 'Des espaces autres' in *Dits et Écrits*, 1954-1988, Vol. 4: 1980-1988, Paris 1994, 41-45 and 757-761.

During the Anglo-Mughal conflict of 1689-90 (the Mughal) fleet nearly wrested Bombay from the English East India Company. As long as they remained near the coast, their galleys proved not all inferior to European shipping.<sup>349</sup>

By describing the water settings in a threatening way, Musta‘idd Ḥān designed his narrative strategy to particularly highlight the contrast between the civilised Mughal characters on the one side and the wild and uncivilised nature and local enemies on the other. Additionally, by the conquest of such a deadly setting, for example through the construction of a bridge in only seven days, the author highlights the courage, discipline, and technical skills of the Mughal *bildars* (pioneers).<sup>350</sup> Finally, this way of designing the water setting underlines the text’s permanent state of emergency, which allowed the author to portray Aurangzīb as the narrative’s victim and to present his actions to the recipient from a forgiving perspective.

The author’s individual style is made clear when we look at other prominent Mughal authors and their description of this setting. They often portrayed the river and the sea as beautiful and picturesque: if such a description had fitted into his narrative strategy, then Musta‘idd Ḥān could have easily referred to such writings.<sup>351</sup> In the *Memoirs of Babur*, probably one of the most impressive early modern ego-documents,<sup>352</sup> the young conqueror of Northern India reports in numerous chapters about the wonderful rivers and beautiful springs of his new kingdom:

(...) A large river runs through it, and on either side of it are gardens, green, gay, and beautiful. Its water is so cold, that there is no need of icing it; and it is particularly pure (...) <sup>353</sup> On the other side it has the river Kohik. The temperature of the air is charming; the appearance of the country beautiful, water abundant, and provisions cheap.<sup>354</sup>

Just as Bābur’s descriptions refer both to his paradisiacal Transoxania and the recently conquered northern India, his great-grandson Ġahāngīr admires India’s rivers and waters on numerous occasions in ways that we would never find in the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*:

How shall I write its praise? As far as the eye could reach flowers of various hue were blooming, and in the midst of the flowers and verdure beautiful streams of water were flowing

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<sup>349</sup> Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*. 164.

<sup>350</sup> Idem, 181.

<sup>351</sup> The only peaceful description of a water setting where the protagonist and his troops felt comfortable is not found before 1700 (429-430).

<sup>352</sup> See Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises*.

<sup>353</sup> Annette Beveridge (trans.), *The Bābur-nāma*, London 1922, 216.

<sup>354</sup> Idem, 85.

(...) <sup>355</sup> I continued to reside there for one whole year, during which I laid out, moreover, several fine gardens, with beautiful water-works and cascades. <sup>356</sup>

I will now switch to the next setting, which at first does not seem particularly spectacular. However, upon closer examination, I realised how advanced Musta‘idd Ḥān’s narrative strategy was. In the next part, we will discuss how the author chose the night as yet another threatening setting for the Mughals and again provided it with a much deeper meaning.

## THE NIGHT

In her recent study on the cultural history of the night, Elisabeth Bronfen appeals for a deeper analysis of the night and its protagonists. <sup>357</sup> The central question of her work is the relationship between enlightened day and the depression of the night (*Nachtverdrängtem*), and the unclear breaks between the two. This dualism also plays a vital part in Musta‘idd Ḥān’s narrative strategy, as he created a border which initially seems passable for both parties (the Mughals and their opponents), but which was perceived and evaluated quite differently.

In the excerpt we cited earlier, Saif Šikan Ḥān tried to attack at night during his campaign, but the action ended in a defeat. Although the Mughal troops were able to march successfully at night, this must be seen as a forced reaction to the enemy’s moves. <sup>358</sup> Of course, these marches can also be seen as a subjugation of this sphere, but this does not mean that the Mughals in the text voluntarily used the night for strategic advantage.

On the other hand, enemies continuously attack the Mughals at night, using the setting’s specific strategic advantage on numerous occasions. <sup>359</sup> This is clear in the night attack of the ‘infernal Šīvā’ <sup>360</sup> and in Dārā’s nocturnal flight. In sharp contrast, Aurangzīb kept waiting for the morning to continue his march. <sup>361</sup> Additionally, the night is not only the setting of hostile

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<sup>355</sup> Henry Beveridge (trans.), *The Tūzūk-i Jahāngīrī*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., New Delhi, 1973, vol. 2, 164.

<sup>356</sup> David Price, *Memoirs of the Emperor Johangueir*, London, 1829, 113.

<sup>357</sup> Elisabeth Bronfen, *Tiefer als der Tag gedacht. Eine Kulturgeschichte der Nacht*, Munich, 2008. I also profited from Silvia Mieszkowski’s ambitious study, which discusses several night narratives in a comparative perspective, see idem, *Teasing Narratives. Europäische Verführungsgeschichten nach ihrem goldenen Zeitalter*, Berlin, 2003, 111 ff.

<sup>358</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 16, 197.

<sup>359</sup> Idem, 7, 13-14, 20, 45, 192, 204, 207, 215, 235, 266, 290, 291, 377, 378, 398, 411, 414, 419, 454, 455, 457.

<sup>360</sup> Idem, 45.

<sup>361</sup> Idem, 9.



attacks against the Mughals, but also a place for ominous events: mysterious signs appear in the sky and monsters and earthquakes kill thousands of people.<sup>362</sup>

This specific way of writing about the dark and the night reminds one of contemporary treatises from the European Enlightenment. Here, many writers used the imagery of the night, and darkness in general, as a metaphor for backwardness, delusion, and superstition.<sup>363</sup> A parallel can be seen in the *Ma'āşir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, as the author used the dichotomy between light and dark to contrast the narrative's characters. The use of the night and darkness in Musta'idd Hān's narrative strategy is characterised by the way in which they give the enemy a strategic advantage and how they act as a threatening manifestation of the great unknown.

The design of the night as the setting of the Mughals' enemies is apparent in the campaign of Saif Šafīk Hān. This is of particular interest, as both threatening borders (the rivers and the night) characterise this section. Upon entering these doomed settings, the author highlights that the troops were now forsaken by God, since he states explicitly that Saif Šafīk Hān's ally Muḥammad Ṣalīḥ '(...) was not divinely guided (...)'.<sup>364</sup>

The Mughals' misfortunes in nocturnal actions continue until the end of our text. It is striking that the Mughals only fight at night on seven occasions in the text, whereas their enemies do so on more than 20. However, we must note that two of these seven Mughal actions are marches<sup>365</sup> and four are nocturnal attacks: all of them were reactions to the movements of enemies.<sup>366</sup> Finally, six of these campaigns were not directly ordered by Aurangzīb: he is not even present in these settings. Rather, it was the empire's princes who showed an exceptional level of activity in these gloomy sections.<sup>367</sup> The author may have tried to occasionally assign the princes to the hostile camp and their settings because they all too often stood against the protagonist.<sup>368</sup>

The only exception can be found on page 294. Here, the protagonist himself orders, for the first time, a nocturnal operation instead of waiting for daylight. It is striking that the ruler's

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<sup>362</sup> Idem, 134 ff., 186, 201, 255, 273, 282, 295, 313, 323, 451. See e.g.: '(...) not a soul remained alive; houses, river and plain became filled with the dead. The same was the condition of the camp. At night piles of the dead were formed round the Emperor's quarters' (292).

<sup>363</sup> Christian Casanova, *Nacht-Leben. Orte, Akteure und obrigkeitliche Disziplinierung in Zürich, 1523-1833*, Zürich, 2007; Roger Ekirch, *At Day's Close. A History of Nighttime*, London, 2006; Walter Seitter, *Geschichte der Nacht*, Berlin, 1999; Carsten Zelle, *Das 18. Jahrhundert jenseits der Aufklärung?* Göttingen, 1997; see also Edith Koller, 'Nacht' in *Enzyklopädie der Neuzeit*, vol. 8. ed. Friedrich Jäger, Stuttgart, 2008, 1021-1023.

<sup>364</sup> Idem, 16.

<sup>365</sup> Idem, 16, 329,

<sup>366</sup> Idem, 187, 357, 487, 500.

<sup>367</sup> Idem, 487, 500.

<sup>368</sup> See in detail: Faruqi, *Princes of the Mughal Empire*.

only night operation is directed against his sons. Equally, the anecdote's ending is of crucial importance in terms of the narrative structure, as the protagonist cried out at the end of the operation that all his efforts had been without any effect: 'I have razed to the ground the work of forty years!'<sup>369</sup> The dramatic effect of this direct speech is exceptional, and it speaks volumes that Musta'idd Ḥān placed it during the only night attack that Aurangzīb himself ordered. It is thus obvious that the author kept Aurangzīb away from all aspects of nocturnal and dark settings. By separating the daily and nocturnal settings, Musta'idd Ḥān drew an equivalence between the brave Mughals and light, whereas the threatening enemies are paired with sinister darkness and the unknown night.

The imperial troops not only avoid military campaigns during the night, but also try and steer clear from nocturnal festivities. At Muḥammad Akbar's wedding with Bānū Bīgam in the summer of 1672, Mughal officers illuminated the darkness with fireworks.<sup>370</sup> Of course, these fireworks were a crucial element of early modern festivities and aristocratic self-staging; thus, this detail does not seem out of the ordinary at first.<sup>371</sup> However, upon closer examination and keeping in mind the rest of the text and Musta'idd Ḥān's narrative strategy, this event is conspicuous, since it is one of the very few peaceful night settings that testifies to great joy on the Mughal side. Light is explicitly highlighted at the wedding's close ('wooden structures were set up for the illumination').

The specific utilisation of the night in a negative context strongly characterises the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* and its narrative strategy; in many other Mughal chronicles, the opposite occurs. Here, the night is not a fixed border where the narrative's characters stop or avoid this specific setting. Rather, in these writings, the night is an integral part of the characters' creativity: the Mughals even expand the scope of their activities. The night is a place for theological disputations, royal festivities, and dreams<sup>372</sup> and their interpretation.<sup>373</sup> In Abū l-Faḥr's masterpiece, the *Akbār-nāma*, we read '(...) the pure form was conveyed to the

<sup>369</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*. 294-295, I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āṣiri Ālamgiri*, 179.

<sup>370</sup> Idem, 119. The description of the wedding takes up two pages, 118-120.

<sup>371</sup> See Kirsten Dickhaut/et al. (eds.), *Soziale und ästhetische Praxis der höfischen Fest-Kultur im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, Wiesbaden, 2009, e.g. 70, 151, 197. Also, in detail, Louis Marin, *Le portrait du roi*, Paris, 2001.

<sup>372</sup> The only dream to be found in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* is on page 326. However, it is not the dream of our protagonist and its content is purely political. Imaginative, let alone erotic, dreams are not to be found anywhere in our text.

<sup>373</sup> A whole chapter can be found on Akbar's dreams in the *Ā'in Akbarī*, vol. 3, chap. 216. Equally, in the memoirs of his son Ḡahāngīr, Akbar appears in a dream to his son: this text also dedicates a whole chapter to dreams; see also Beveridge, *The Tūzuk-i-Jahangīrī*, vol. 1, chapter 104. Plenty of other examples could be mentioned.

chamber of fortune, and the bridal night of joy was celebrated.<sup>374</sup> Throughout Rūmī's writings, the night occupies a central role: 'O river singing to the stars above! O Night of Nights! So beautiful the face of her I love.'<sup>375</sup> However, we would never find verses like those of Rumi in our text. Nor would we find observations like those of 'Abdullāh Waṣṣāf in his four volume *tārīkh-i waṣṣāf*.

In his detailed observations about India, we witness that particular Muslim orientalism which Alam and Subrahmanyam equated with Said's concepts in European history.<sup>376</sup> Polytheistic ceremonies, beetle-chewing peasants, elephant races, and prostitutes draped with jewels attracted Christian European travellers just as much as they did *tārīkh-i waṣṣāf*.

They used to perform the several duties prescribed to each of them; some were appointed as chamberlains, some as interpreters, some as cup-bearers, and day and night both the sexes kept promiscuous intercourse together; and it was usual for the king to invite to his bed that girl upon whom the lot should happen to fall.<sup>377</sup>

Such a positive description of the night or such a specific use of this precise setting cannot be found at any point within the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*: certainly there is no indication that Aurangzīb would have preferred the night and its festivities more than the day. On the contrary, while Mu'azzam's wedding was in full swing, the author explicitly declares that Aurangzīb went to the mosque.<sup>378</sup> 'The festivities began (...) and the Emperor sat in the Court of Private Audience (...) In the night, the Prince came with pomp and showed it to the Emperor. (But) He went to the mosque.'<sup>379</sup>

However, what might appear at first glance to be the orthodox attitude of Aurangzīb had a much deeper meaning. Here, the nocturnal setting not only serves as a symbol of the uncontrollable festival, but also as a stage for the prince's wealth, which he now flaunts in front of his father. Our author could not have made the dualism between the two more subtle: in this excerpt, the author used the night to symbolise the life-long frictions between father and son that nearly resulted in open rebellion in the 1670s and 1680s had not the prince's mother Nawāb Bā'ī repeatedly defused the tension.<sup>380</sup> I will discuss the protagonist's discipline and austere lifestyle in detail in a further chapter, but it is noteworthy that the

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<sup>374</sup> Beveridge, *The Akbarnama of Abūl-Fazl*, vol. 3, 677.

<sup>375</sup> Hafiz, *Odes from the Divan of Hafiz*, Freely Rendered from Literal Translations, 1905, Reprint, London, 2013. 20-1.

<sup>376</sup> Alam, *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries*, 72-76.

<sup>377</sup> Henry Elliot, *The History of India*, vol. 3, London 1871, 54.

<sup>378</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 77-78, I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āṣiri Ālamgiri*, 49.

<sup>379</sup> Idem, 77-78.

<sup>380</sup> Faruqi, *Princes of the Mughal Empire*, 311.

author announces these attributes by using Mu'azzam's wedding in order to underline the youthful profligacy on the son and the discipline and piety of the protagonist.<sup>381</sup> Our author, therefore, did not allow his protagonist any direct military successes at night or any nocturnal pleasures; instead, the night is simply yet another setting for Aurangzīb to work and to fulfil his duties.<sup>382</sup> Not a single place can be found within the entire text where we can see that the protagonist was comfortable in the night or darkness.

I would therefore summarise the function of the night within our text as follows. First of all, the author described the night as a setting of constant threat to the Mughals and the enemies' starting point for attacks against them.<sup>383</sup> However, once the Mughal characters enter this setting, the picture looks rather different. In this situation, the attention focuses on the protagonist's nocturnal working habits and his fulfilment of religious duties.<sup>384</sup> Such instances also include several nocturnal death narratives.<sup>385</sup> A positive description of the night, such as that produced by Amīr Ḥusrū, has no place in our text. On the contrary, the author points out that it is a great offence to spend the night indulging in joy and vices when he accuses Abū 'l-Ḥassan, one of the narrative's greatest traitors, of the following:

In the excess of his drunkenness with the wine (...), Abū 'l-Ḥassan did not distinguish night and day any more. And because of his enslavement to bad company and desires, he refused the Faith to duplicity.<sup>386</sup>

In regard to the narrative strategy, the author decided to let their protagonist and his followers avoid the darkness and the uncontrollable night: his descriptions of these settings are devoid of dreams, joy, lust, and everything else that can be connected with them. Our protagonist finds neither joy nor pleasure at night, and he enters this setting primarily to continue his work and to receive strength from prayer. Even during celebrations like his son's wedding, he prefers to withdraw for as long as possible. On the other hand, the author highlighted what happens when a character acts licentiously at night. Dārā, the night character *par excellence*, is described as an idler (he enjoys repose),<sup>387</sup> while Abū 'l-Ḥassan is explicitly condemned for his less-than-savoury nocturnal activities.

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<sup>381</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 78.

<sup>382</sup> Idem, 70, 134, 149, 201, 225, 282, 294, 313, 451, 525.

<sup>383</sup> Idem, 19, 45, 89, 200, 203, 204, 215, 235, 266, 290-291, 357, 376, 378, 398, 411, 413, 419, 426, 431, 453, 456, 458, 500.

<sup>384</sup> Idem, 70, 134, 149, 201, 225, 282, 294, 313, 451, 525.

<sup>385</sup> Idem, 8, 53, 306, 323, 315, 524.

<sup>386</sup> Idem, 285. Sarkar, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 174.

<sup>387</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 18.

I will now move onto discussing the second setting: here, imperial troops are exposed to further menaces that are just as mysterious and indefinable as the night. Interestingly enough, we will see that it is this gloomy episode in which the intended recipient is confronted by twelve heroic Mughal warriors, whose fate had a much deeper meaning.

## SETTING II: ARAKAN - THE MUGHAL SETTING OF HORROR<sup>388</sup>

### PRELUDE

The Mughal interest in Bengal had steadily increased in the seventeenth century. However, the presence of the imperial troops was also associated with problems, as Gommans shows:

Because the climate of Bengal was very injurious to horses, Akbar had even doubled the allowances of the nobles stationed in Bengal. Indeed, the humid conditions of Bengal, in combination with its extensive network of waterways hindering the movement of cavalry, contributed to Bengal's relatively independent position throughout its history. The Mughals considered it an area of almost permanent sedition, a *bulghaḥāna*, or a 'house of strife', as they called it.<sup>389</sup>

Our author confirms this situation in the following excerpt. We are now in the third year of Aurangzīb's reign. Musta'idd Ḥān writes:

I shall now leave the account of the incidents of the Court, but this small book cannot hold even an abridged history of the occurrences of Bengal and the exertions of the imperial army. They had been deputed from Allahabad in January 1659 under leadership of Prince Muḥammad Ṣultān and Mu'aẓẓam Ḥān in pursuit of Ğūḡā' [Šāh Ğāhān's second son)]. This is the reason why I give up the attempt to describe this affair in detail. Suffice to say that the march of the imperial army put Ğūḡā' to such hard straits that none could hold with him save Sayyid 'Ālam Badalaš and a few other men.

After traversing calamitous regions, he reached the most villainous island of Arakan where he was entrapped in the snare of that land of infidels. His fate will be narrated in the proper place.<sup>390</sup>

The present excerpt took place just after Aurangzīb's second (and more formal) coronation on 5 June 1659. The year starts well, with relaxation, daily amusement, and joyous music during Ramaḍān.<sup>391</sup> The court is pleased to hear that Aurangzīb's second oldest brother, Šāh Ğūḡā', has fled to Arakan. However, the author intervenes promptly and directly, saying that he has

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<sup>388</sup> I am very thankful to Musharraf Ali Farooqi's suggestions for the present analysis.

<sup>389</sup> Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*, 27.

<sup>390</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*, 30. I took this part from Sarkar, *Ma'āṣirī Ālamgiri*, 18.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibd.*

to leave this joyous description of festivity at the court: he admits that he is only able to rudimentarily report on the exertions that the imperial armies will suffer during the Bengal campaign.<sup>392</sup>

Musta‘idd Hān now skips from one threatening setting to the next one. The setting of Arakan is portrayed as a very gloomy one: it is named as a ‘calamitous region’<sup>393</sup> that is ‘most villainous’.<sup>394</sup> The infidels pushed Aurangzīb’s brother into a trap and we expect a denouement. However, the recipient remains in the dark: ‘His fate will be narrated in the proper place’.<sup>395</sup> What could have been another clear victory for Aurangzīb remains an uncertain threat. We do not find any more information about what happened to Šāh Ġūḡā‘ or the Mughals who pursued him. The tension therefore increases considerably.

It is thus remarkable that the author emphasised the twelve nameless Mughal warriors, and we cannot avoid digging deeper in order to understand why the author used this specific number in connection with this group of heroic combatants. Firstly, even though we cannot exactly say why he used this figure, we must nevertheless note that he does so. Secondly, this specific number has a deeper meaning not only within the ‘monotheistic world zone’,<sup>396</sup> but also in Hindu and Buddhist culture. It is therefore important to list the symbolic meanings of this number in different cultures when trying to answer the question of *why* our author highlighted the fact that there were precisely twelve brave warriors in such a threatening setting.

In Greek mythology, there were twelve titans and twelve Olympian gods. Twelve specific tests were imposed on the hero Heracles. After the sons of Jacob, the people of Israel in the Old Testament are divided into twelve tribes. In the New Testament, Jesus gathered twelve disciples around him, who became the apostles. The Imāmi or Twelver Šī‘its, the largest group of Šī‘it Islam, recognise twelve imāms as the successors of the Prophet Muḥammad. The twelfth, Muḥammad al-Mahdī, the so-called hidden (*ḡaiba*) imām, will return as the

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<sup>392</sup> Idem, 43-44.

<sup>393</sup> Idem, 31.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid.

<sup>396</sup> The concept of the *monotheistische Weltzone* is mainly used by Michael Borgolte in his most recent studies: see, for example, idem, ‘Christliche und muslimische Repräsentationen der Welt. Ein Versuch in transdisziplinärer Mediävistik’ in Angelika Neuwirt, et al. (eds.), *Europa im Nahen Osten - der Nahe Osten in Europa*, Berlin, 2010, 131-190, 132 f.; see also Sanjay Subrahmanyam’s concept of the *Connected History* of early modern Eurasia, idem, ‘Connected Histories, Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia’ in *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 31, no. 3, Special Issue: The Eurasian Context of the Early Modern History of Mainland South East Asia, 1400-1800, 1997, 735-762; idem, *Explorations in Connected History. From the Tagus to the Ganges*; idem, *Explorations in Connected History. Mughals and Franks*, New Delhi, 2005.

saviour of the world. In Hindu astrology, there are twelve *Rashi* (zodiac signs), while in Buddhism there are twelve members of the council of the Dalai Lama.

The intended recipients of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* included not only elite Sunni Muslims, but also Šī'its and Hindus.<sup>397</sup> By reading or listening to this story, they would have dwelt on the symbolic meaning of the number twelve within Islamic and Hindu cultures, which I will now discuss with a particular focus on possible Šī'it-recipients.

#### TWELVE HEROIC WARRIORS AND THEIR ŠĪ'ITE RECIPIENTS

Within this except, our author played with literary techniques like tension<sup>398</sup> to draw the recipients, mainly elite Muslims of both Sunni and šī'ite origin, into the narrative. In this context, the number twelve is of crucial importance. Let us begin with another important source reporting on Aurangzīb's reign, his collected anecdotes. In the section entitled 'the magic number twelve', Aurangzīb enjoyed playing with the meaning of this number when leaving Islāmpūrī:

(Aurangzīb) ordered that every day Muḥlis Ḥān, the second paymaster, should present to His Majesty ten manṣab-dārs (military officers) from among the hereditary servants (ḥanahzad) and others, but excluding the Deccanis. The Ḥān submitted, 'As your Majesty has followed the verse "These are the ten perfect ones" in ordering that ten officers with their retinue (misl) should be daily paraded before you, it is good. Otherwise, if the number be twelve, there is no harm. The Emperor replied, 'Your request, too, is not unsupported by [scriptural] authority. Behold the hours of the day and the signs of the Zodiac, day and night and the heavens too obey the number twelve!' Muḥammad Amin Ḥān (then) said, 'Ay, companionship has a wonderful effect, as I find today. Why should there not be four instead of twelve?' His Majesty replied, 'Four is included in twelve. He smiled and continued, 'Why is it not three, [you might ask]. But twelve is related to three as the double of double. You are free to choose. Do whatever is likely to benefit the creatures of God most.'<sup>399</sup>

Of course, this story, as with so many others, might have simply been appropriated by Aurangzīb in the aftermath of the event. Nevertheless, this textual evidence shows that such number games were quite common in Aurangzīb's time and at his court. We should therefore

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<sup>397</sup> See in detail Georges Ifrah, *Universalgeschichte der Zahlen*, Köln, 1998.

<sup>398</sup> Raimund Borgmeier, et. al., (eds.), *Spannung. Studien zur englischsprachigen Literatur*, Trier, 2001; Peter Vorderer, *Suspense. Conceptualizations, Theoretical Analyses, and Empirical Explorations*, Mahwah, 1996; Alwin Fill, *Das Prinzip Spannung. Sprachwissenschaftliche Betrachtungen zu einem universalen Phänomen*, Tübingen, 2003.

<sup>399</sup> Jadunath Sarkar (trans.), *Anecdotes of Aurangzib. English translation of Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*, Calcutta, 1949, see here chpt. 56, paragraph 45 'The Mystic Number Twelve'.

rightly assume that the author's intended recipients were aware of the number's important symbolism.

Additionally, Musta'idd Hān might have been arousing the recipient's attention by an allusion to famous epic narratives such as the *Šāhnāmeḥ* (*the Book of Kings*), the work of the Persian poet Abū 'l-Qāsim Firdūsī (940/41-1020).<sup>400</sup> The chapter about the battle of the twelve *Ruḥ* (champions), which shows the Persian as winners, is one of the most popular sections within the *Šāhnāmeḥ*. Thanks to Charles Melville's important ongoing research on the *Šāhnāmeḥ*,<sup>401</sup> we are very well informed about the wide readership of Firdūsī's writing in Mughal India:

The relevant scenes from Firdausi's and Nizami's texts were illustrated in several valuable Persian manuscripts that made their way to the Mughal court and subsequently to the imperial library. One such example is the *Shahnama* of Muḥammad Juki dated to the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century (...) and bears the seal of the Mughal emperors Babur, Humāyūn, Ġahāngīr, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzib.<sup>402</sup>

Besides this prominent literary reference and the highly symbolic meaning of the number twelve in general, there is also the fact that Twelver Šī'a (*aš-Šī'a al-Itnā 'ašarīya*) became the state religion of Iran in the sixteenth century and the most significant direction within Šī'a teachings (besides the *Ismā'īliya* and the *az-Zaidīya* in Yemen). The twelve imāms are, from Muḥammad's son-in-law 'Alī b. 'Abī Ṭālib (died 661) onwards, the spiritual and political successors of the Prophet. The last of the twelve imāms, Ḥassan al-Maḥdī (died circa 941), is held not to have died but rather to be still living in occultation (*ḡaiba*), waiting for his return to the faithful.<sup>403</sup> In his standard study on the history of the Šī'a in India, Heinz Halm concludes:

From the 14<sup>th</sup> century Twelver shi'a was introduced into India by dynasties whose erstwhile spheres of rule are still marked today by the three big Twelver Shia-regions in India and Pakistan. Twelver Shi'ism had gained a foothold in the Dekkan under the first Islāmic state, the Bahmanii sultanate founded in 1347 by mercenary leaders, and in the 16th century it expanded into its five successor states, the Dekkan sultanates of Berar, Ahmadnager, Bidar, Bijapur and Golkonda (the last with its capital Hyderabad founded in 1589), which were politically,

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<sup>400</sup> Firdūsī worked for nearly 35 years on this epic of the Persian-speaking world. The *Šāhnāmeḥ* is one of the most famous works of Persian and world literature; with nearly 60,000 verses in couplets, it is more than twice as long as Homer's epics. See Barabara Brend, *Epic of the Persian Kings. The Art of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh*, London, 2010.

<sup>401</sup> See <http://persian.pem.cam.ac.uk/>, last accessed 25 July 2015.

<sup>402</sup> Abdela Qureshi, 'Bahram's Feat of Hunting Dexterity as Illustrated in Firdausi's *Shahnama*, Nizami's *Haft Paikar* and Amir Khusrau's *Hasht Bishisht*' in *Shahnama Studies II. The Reception of Firdausi's Shahnama*, ed. Charles Melville, et al., Leiden, 2012, 181-213, 188.

<sup>403</sup> Heinz Halm, *Shi'a Islam*, Michigan, 2009, 93 ff.



culturally and religiously under the influence of the Iranian Safavid empire. Even after the Dekkan sultanates had merged with the empire of the Sunni Mughals in the 17th century a strong Twelver Šī'it minority survived in the region of Hyderabad and continues to do so up to the present day.<sup>404</sup>

Finally, Halm discusses other important areas in India, as Twelver Šī'a was not just limited to Safavid Iran: Awadh, the stronghold of Indian Twelver Šī'ism, and Kašmīr must also be mentioned. Salma Farooqui, in her study on the presence of Islam in India, argues that there were '(...) Shia influences (...) already (...) when Abūl Fazl joined Akbar's court.'<sup>405</sup>

In addition to Halm's argument, current research emphasises the fact that Aurangzīb was often surrounded by Šī'it-followers. Scholars such as Muḥammad Bāqir Maḡlisī (1616-1699) played an important role. Born in Isfāhān, the capital of the Safavid Empire, he was a Šī'a cleric and theologian. Besides the fact that his religious office made him the highest clerical authority of his time, he also wrote over 100 books in Arabic and Persian. Maḡlisī was *the* main representative of seventeenth-century šī'ite intellectuals, organising official šī'ite theology in a systematic way. The provision of a study allowed him to compile a theological encyclopaedia of 26 volumes, the *Ocean of Light (Bihār al-'Anwār)*, the largest *aḥādīṭ* of Twelver Šī'ism.<sup>406</sup>

During Aurangzīb's reign, the works of Maḡlisī were received in India and were studied not only by the šī'ite scholars, but also by members of the Sunni Mughal elite, such as Aurangzīb's brothers.<sup>407</sup> His writings, along with many other šī'ite texts, '(...) circulated with considerable freedom and frequency' in early modern India.<sup>408</sup> In this context, Nile Green argues in his recent history that šī'ite influence on Aurangzīb's policy might have been larger than was previously assumed:

(...) The new legalistic turn under Awrangzeb can also be connected to the era's crisis of conscience as espoused by such men as Sirhindi and the highly influential Iranian anti-Šūfī jurist Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisi (died 1699), who visited India several times between the 1660s and 1690s and may have corresponded with Aurangzīb.<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> Idem, *Shi'ism*, Edinburgh, 2004, 134 f.

<sup>405</sup> Salma Farooqui, *Islam and the Mughal State*, New Delhi, 2005, 76.

<sup>406</sup> Wilferd Madelung, 'Shī'a' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition. Brill Online, 2012, [http://www.pauyonline.brill.nl/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/shia-SIM\\_6920](http://www.pauyonline.brill.nl/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/shia-SIM_6920), last accessed 31/08/2012.

<sup>407</sup> Rizvi, *A Socio-intellectual History of the Isnā 'Asharī Shī'īs in India*, 96.

<sup>408</sup> Justin Jones, *Shi'a Islam in Colonial India. Religion, Community and Sectarianism*, Cambridge, 2011, 60.

<sup>409</sup> Nile Green, *Sufism. A Global History*, Malden, 2012, 165. Green's argument is rather exceptional. Generally, the classic narrative of Aurangzeb as an imperturbable Šī'a-hater dominates the research. See Salma Ahmad Farooqi, who summarises in her recent study the classical narrative on Aurangzīb's attitude towards Šī'it Islām:

Even if Aurangzīb was not in direct contact with this important scholar, he certainly did have knowledge with his writings, since it is probable that many of the Shiite nobles of his entourage followed the latter's teachings. We must remember that many in his inner circle of nobles and family members were actually Šī'its; indeed, the emperor was born to Mumtāz Maḥal, the favourite Šī'te wife of Šāh Ġāhān. His uncle Šaysta Ḥān, a leading officer of the imperial army, was a Šī'te, as was his favorite commander Mīr Ġumla. Other important Šī'te commanders such as Rūḥ Allāh Baḥšī al-Mumālik and Mīr Atiš belonged to the Iranian Safavi family. Aurangzīb married his son A'zam Šāh to the Šī'te Princess Šīhar Banū, Dārā's daughter. Aurangzīb's eldest son Muḥammad Šulṭān was married to the princess of the Šī'te Qutb Šāhī.<sup>410</sup>

Furthermore, we can be quite sure that the author's intended recipient, Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur, was not only familiar with Maḡlisī's teaching in particular, but also with the Šī'ia interpretation of Islam in general. To understand this anecdote, it is crucial to know that the new ruler made a decisive step towards the Šī'ites in the north of his empire in 1709; in other words, at a time when our author had already been working on the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* for two years. In that year, as shown above, he called upon the city of Lahore to recite the Friday prayer (*ḥuṭba*) in the Šī'te style. The following *ḥuṭba* debate was so intense that it lasted for another two years: thus, Bahādur, shortly before his death in 1711, personally went to Lahore to discuss the issue with the city's scholars.<sup>411</sup> It is striking that this dialogue occurred in the middle of Musta'idd Ḥān's writing process: it must certainly have been noticed by our author. Furthermore, our author must have been aware of the fact that Šī'te families and nobles had acquired more and more influence at the royal court. When Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur died in 1712, the Sayyīd brothers, both strong Šī'te followers, took over only eleven months into Jahāndār Šāh's short reign (1712-1713). These famous Šī'te brothers successfully expanded their influence and strengthened their networks between 1707 and 1711, which led to their rise to power some years later.

Considering that Twelver Šī'ism was a significant geopolitical factor in Mughal India, with important urban centres that contained a strong Šī'it public, the fact that Aurangzīb himself

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'Aurangzīb spent the last 25 years of his rule (1682-1707) in the Deccan. His attitude towards the Shi'a states of Bijapur and Golconda had always been aggressive - partly influenced by his imperialist ambitions and partly by his religious bigotry.' When discussing the fate of 'Abd al-Ḥasan, the ruler of Golconda, Farooqi adds: 'Aurangzīb's grievance was not only that he was a Šī'a, but also the he patronised Hindus in his Kingdom.' See idem, *A Comprehensive History of India*, 263.

<sup>410</sup> See in detail Mohammad Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzīb*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New Delhi, 2001.

<sup>411</sup> On this event see Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India*, 30-31, 167-168; also Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*, 151 and Ja'far, *Islam in India*, 15.

was surrounded by several influential noble Šīʿits, such as his favourite General Mīr Ğumla, and that even the *Maʿāšir-i ʿĀlamgīrī*'s intended recipient Šāh ʿĀlam Bahādur tried to approach influential Šīʿits in his reign, the story of the twelve Mughals may well have produced significant effects on its audience. A well-educated Šīʿite noble at the beginning of the eighteenth century who was reading or listening to our chronicle may have immediately related these twelve Muslim Mughal warriors to the legend of the twelve brave imams. Here, I refer explicitly to the argumentation of Narayanaravu, Shulmann, and Subrahmanyam in their important study *Textures of Time*. These authors assume that recipients were indeed able to grasp the primary intention of the author(s), as they were not simply passive consumers of the text but rather active participants in the recitation of the narrative.<sup>412</sup>

The number twelve, when used in conjunction with Muslim warriors who at first disappear but whose return remains possible, would have immediately evoked in the intended recipients (in this case noble Šīʿite Muslims) the fate of their revered imāms. Additionally, the twelve Mughals are mentioned in a threatening setting, which evokes yet another parallel to the sufferings of the Šīʿite imāms.

Finally, within this scary setting, the Mughals themselves are consistently described as brave and their opponents as sneaky cowards. It would have been very easy for our author to describe the number twelve in a negative way by associating this number, and thus twelve Šīʿism, with traitors and cheaters. He could have also just skipped this number. However, the opposite occurs; skilfully, Mustaʿidd Ḥān produced a setting which shows clear parallels to the Šīʿite story of salvation. In this section, the number twelve is associated with attributes such as bravery, honour, solidarity, duty, and obedience. We thus see that the author did not just address his text to proto-orthodox elite Sunnis, but also, albeit in a prudent and cautious manner, to Šīʿite Muslims.

We can only speculate, but it seems very plausible that our author did not want to annoy these highly influential nobles with his new text, since doing so would be damaging for his future career at the court. Given that so much remained in dark about the course of Šāh ʿĀlam Bahādur's government, this brief and cautious anecdote about the twelve courageous Mughal warriors testifies to the fact that Mustaʿidd Ḥān indeed tried to process and respond to current events in his text. In this particular case, he was probably influenced by the new ruler's approach to the Šīʿia and possibly even the intense *ḥuṭba* debate of 1709. It is hence exactly

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<sup>412</sup> See in detail Rao, *Textures of Time* and Pollock, *Pretextures of Time*.

here where we realise that the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* is not only a backwards-looking chronicle, but rather a text that represents the social and political condition of the time in which it was composed, adapting and reacting to the demands of its various and changing recipients. It is exactly here where Rajeev Kinra's reasoning helps us, as he shows in his latest study that '(...) Indo-Persian (...) literary cultures were inextricably intertwined, often sharing the same physical space within the urban landscape (and) hubbub(s) of the public culture (...) of the time they had been written.'<sup>413</sup>

I will now move onto the final example of a threatening setting: Arakan and Bengal were not the only potentially fatal challenges to the imperial troops and their emperor.

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<sup>413</sup> Kinra, *Writing Self*, 148.

### SETTING III: THE POISONED AIR OF ASSAM AND THE MUGHALS' EXPULSION FROM PARADISE

#### PRELUDE

Along with the rivers, the jungle, and the night, another clear border was drawn by Musta'idd Ḥān in relation to Aurangzīb's expansion: the mountains. In the excerpt quoted at the beginning of this discussion, the author specifically pointed out that Aurangzīb immediately withdrew his troops once he got news that Šūkūh had fled into the hills: 'Šūkūh fled into the hills of Kašmīr whereas the Emperor ordered immediately the force which he had sent against him to return.'<sup>414</sup>

Given the protagonist's previous experience with mountains, this avoidance of the hills makes sense. The Mughals had tried several times to conquer the north-western border and Central Asia, but always failed to produce a long-term success. Even though Aurangzīb's father Šāh Jahān successfully conquered Kandahar in 1638, he lost it in 1649 to the Persians. In 1652-53, he ordered both of his ambitious sons Aurangzīb and Dārā Šikūh to undertake a massive campaign to reconquer Kandahar, but the Mughals failed again. Šāh Jahān also failed to retake the former Mughal homelands, Samarkand and Transoxania, from the Uzbīks. This only occurred when Aurangzīb's younger brother Murād finally conquered Balḥ (in present-day Afghanistan) in 1646 with 50,000 men. However, when Aurangzīb succeeded his father, the problems emerged again. Given that the Mughal military had been drilled primarily for open-field battles, they were not able to withstand the Uzbīk guerrilla attacks, who used their knowledge of the rugged mountain regions to defeat the imperial forces several times. The campaign against the Uzbīks was a disaster, claiming thousands of victims among the imperial forces, although it was still an impressive logistical feat for the Mughal armies to advance that far into the northwest, distant from the imperial centre.<sup>415</sup> What made the situation even worse was that they had to struggle with those former allies who were responsible for Babūr's success in conquering Northern India in 1526: '(...) The Uzbīk armies felt very much at home in the area and knew how to live off the land and how to use its grazing potential. This had been just the kind of army that served Babur so well during the early years of his career.'<sup>416</sup> Finally, from 1636 to 1638, as the imperial forces started their campaign into the north-eastern regions of Assam, they made extensive use of riverboats with

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<sup>414</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 10. In connection to the Mughal avoidance of the hills, it is striking that the only time Mughal troops are directly sent into the hills was done under the leadership of the Hindu general Raja Rajrup, see idem, 26.

<sup>415</sup> Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*, 198, also 179 f.

<sup>416</sup> Idem, *Mughal Warfare*, 186.

bow-mounted cannons. Although they succeed in 1637 at the Battle of Burpetah, they lost near Kajali the year after, which led to an unsatisfactory compromise.<sup>417</sup> The Mughal leadership had to accept that their attempt to rule much of Central Asia had failed and that their river and mountain campaigns in these areas were doomed to end in disaster.<sup>418</sup>

Returning to our text, it becomes clear that Musta‘idd Hān processed these dramatic experiences in the Mughals’ recent past. Throughout the whole text, the author consistently equates the mountains and hills with the other threatening settings analysed above (the jungle, the river, and the night). This trend pervades the entire narrative: descriptions like that of Sulaiman Shukoh’s escape into the mountains<sup>419</sup> occur again and again. Thus, the mountains act in the text first and foremost as a haven for the Mughals’ enemies.<sup>420</sup> Combined, these settings are mainly places of death for the Mughals (‘(...) several thousand men had lost their lives by falling from the summit of the hills’).<sup>421</sup> However, the mountains are also the subjects of the Mughals’ attempts to discipline untamed nature; for instance, when they attempt to terraform the landscape to make it easier to deploy their troops.<sup>422</sup> The only major exception can be found in 1702, when Musta‘idd Hān penned the only peaceful description of a mountain:<sup>423</sup>

The hills and soil of this tract are wonderful: there is (as it were) no trace of hill or land, you see only herbs and flowers. Those who want to behold God’s skill will find nothing so appropriate for their purpose as this garden-like hill and plain. There is not a tree that does not confer some benefit. It has no flower that does not charm the brain with its smell. Every grain of this wide plain can supply the revenue of countries from its fruits and aromatic roots; every particle of its dust attracts the heart.<sup>424</sup>

However, the author does not contradict himself with this beautiful depiction of nature. Rather, this section is proof of his sophisticated narrative strategy. At first sight, the author celebrates God’s creation. Nonetheless, with a closer reading, it is striking that this single beautiful depiction of the mountains, and nature in general, suddenly pops up in the text after more than 450 pages, and just a couple of pages before the death of the protagonist. It is

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<sup>417</sup> Jeremy Black, *Cambridge Illustrated Atlas of Warfare. Renaissance to Revolution, 1492-1792*, Cambridge, 1996, 38 ff.

<sup>418</sup> See Gommans’ detailed analysis on the ‘Limits of Empire’, in idem, *Mughal Warfare*, 169-199.

<sup>419</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma’āsiri-ī Ālamgīrī*, 10.

<sup>420</sup> See e.g., 10, 33, 43 (the Raja’s escape into the hills is mentioned twice on a single page), 61, 200, 250.

<sup>421</sup> Idem, 43 (in combination with the death of enemies!), 117-118.

<sup>422</sup> Idem, 449.

<sup>423</sup> Idem, 456.

<sup>424</sup> Idem, 458. I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma’āsiri Ālamgīrī*, 272-273.

probable that the author wants to emphasise the difficulties the protagonist had to suffer in his life. Given that this specific setting was not described in this way in the preceding 45 years of rule, it is evident that the author was seeking to emphasise the contrast. Since the ideal state of the setting is shown only at the end of the narrative and shortly before the protagonist's death, the sympathy and pity for the emperor rises significantly, as the author has never granted such a peaceful experience of nature to Aurangzīb during his lifetime. In terms of the importance of the closure for the function of the narrative, the narrative's speed decelerates as the closure approaches, thus announcing the end of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*

With this way, Musta'idd Ḥān again significantly distinguished his text from other Mughal sources. Whereas other authors regularly praised the beauty of the mountains,<sup>425</sup> there is only one small description of a beautiful mountain to be found in all 500 pages of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*.

The first explanation of why the author chose to describe the mountains as threatening, with just one exception, must be found in the Mughals' and Aurangzīb's traumatic experiences in the mountains, especially in the Deccan. Here, for one and a half decades and without finally destroying the Maratha hydra, Aurangzīb fought several wars, pushing his kingdom to its financial and physical limits.<sup>426</sup> From the perspective of a chronicler writing after Aurangzīb's death, the mountains, the retreat *par excellence* for the Marathas, logically ought to be described as an exceptionally dangerous setting. However, this is not the only explanation for this notable description of the otherwise acclaimed Indian mountains, as will be shown in the next section. Here, I will show that the mountains also functioned as a crucial literary setting within Musta'idd Ḥān's narrative strategy.

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<sup>425</sup> There are plenty of examples to be found in numerous texts, to name just a few see in detail *The Akbarnama of Abū Fazl*, vol. 3, chpt. 199, *The History of India*, vol.1, chpt. 84, *The Akbarnama of Abū Fazl*, vol. 2, chpt. 92, *The Memoirs of Jahangueir* (Rogers), vol. 2, chpt. 37, *The Memoirs of Babur*, vol. 1, chpt. 41; idem, vol. 2, chpt. 29, *The Seir Mutaqherin*, vol. 2, chpt. 22.

<sup>426</sup> See Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*, 33 f; in detail: Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, 220-223, 225-252; for Aurangzeb's role as a prince and governor in the Deccan, see Faruqi, *Mughal Princes*, 172.

## PART 1 - THE POISONED AIR OF ASSAM

In Aurangzīb's fifth year of reign (1662-1663), the imperial troops were preparing for a major campaign against the Assamese. The importance of this enterprise is illustrated by the fact that Aurangzīb gave leadership of the army to his most skilled and favourite Šī'te general, Mīr Ğumlā. We take up the text during the latter's final campaign in 1663 against Assam, a place from which he would never return:

When the Ḥān-i Ḥānan (=Mīr Ğumlā) took up his residence at Mathutapur for passing the rainy season and water covered the whole land, the Assamese began to act boldly. As the Mughal troops could not ride out, the audacity of the Assamese passed all limits. Their Rājā too came from the hills of Namrup. The Mughal outposts were withdrawn; no other place than Garhgaon and Mathurapur remained in the possession of the imperialists. Provisions were exhausted. The poisonous air caused a pestilence which carried off vast numbers. This affected the whole land of Assam, and vast crowds of the enemy too, in the hills went to hell. During this period the food of the soldiers and the cattle was rice and beef, large quantities of which had been captured from the enemy. There was no alternative but to wait patiently for the end of the rains (...) The rains decreased and boats of provisions too arrived at that time (...) The Rājā fled to the hills, and made overtures of peace, but the Ḥān did not agree and started for Namrup. In the meantime, many acute diseases attacked the Ḥān. The soldiers, worn out with labour and sufferings, were shaken in mind by the fear of dying in such a (terrible) country and wished to desert him, and go back to Bengal. The Ḥān on learning of it was grieved and on Friday (...) he advanced on stage. Necessity now compelled him to decide on peace and return. The Rājā, who saw his own capture imminent, made Dīlīr Ḥān his mediator, and the latter induced the Ḥān-i Ḥānan to agree to the Rājā's proposal.<sup>427</sup>

Which aspects are important here in regards to the analysis of the setting and the text's normative meaning? In the beginning, nature itself gives the green light to the narrative's beginning. It is in reaction to the flooding that the Assamese start their rebellion. For them, nature offers tools for their planned actions: they are using the setting in accordance with their own desires. Even their Rājā leaves the safe mountains. On the other hand, once more the Mughal side has to struggle with hostile natural forces: because of them, they cannot lead their cavalry into the battle. As was already the case with the fight against Dārā, the Mughals' enemies are equated with chaotic nature. The Assamese step out of their natural settings (mountains) by using the rain to their advantage, whereas the Mughals are forced to withdraw their troops from their outposts to safer locales (Mathurapur and Garhgaon).

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<sup>427</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āsiri-Ālamgīrī*, 44-45. I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgīrī*, 26.



Together with active nature, the Assamese are much more mobile figures in this section, as the verbs of motion refer almost exclusively to them. In this specific setting, the author explicitly emphasised that the Mughals had entered a godforsaken place and ‘went to hell’.<sup>428</sup> Additionally, the imperial troops not only suffered from the mountains and rivers, but also from the strange and threatening air, which played a crucial role in regards to the author’s narrative strategy.

With this creepy description of the mountains, the author successfully managed to distract the recipient from Aurangzīb’s coming defeats in the Deccan. At the time of writing, the military overstretch of the empire was by no means limited to the Deccan alone. In Musta‘idd Ḥān’s narrative, all of the mountains of the kingdom appear as a threat. This allows him to describe the protagonist as the narrative’s main victim: everywhere he goes in his kingdom, he encounters insurmountable mountains where countless threats lie in ambush for his troops.

Finally, it is important to consider the questions of *where* in the text Musta‘idd Ḥān positioned Mīr Ğumlā’s campaign and which events and anecdotes he placed around the description. The main event at the beginning of this year, the unexpected illness of the emperor himself, is of utmost importance. Aurangzīb’s health was in serious jeopardy at beginning of May 1662; it was not until the end of June that the population discovered that Aurangzīb was finally on the road to recovery.<sup>429</sup> Within the same year, Mīr Ğumlā also fell ill and died because of the suffering from the Assamese campaign: these are historical facts which one can hardly deny. What is more striking is the gloomy presentation of this poisoned Assamese setting. I argue, therefore, that the detailed narrative of the Assamese campaign should be interpreted in direct connection with Aurangzīb’s illness just one page before and the loss of his best general on the following page.

The recipient witnesses the passive defencelessness of the former emperor and reads on the next page that the same happened to his elite troops and his best general. This section therefore serves as an ideal example of how the author tried to caulk the narrative breaks in the protagonist’s vita.<sup>430</sup> *The Ma’āsiri-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, therefore, is not at all a ‘tiresome’ chronicle, in which the events are only ‘a rigid skeleton of dates’.<sup>431</sup> The opposite is the case, as our author used the settings to convince his intended recipient of his own interpretation of the history of

<sup>428</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma’āsiri-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 44-45

<sup>429</sup> Idem, 41.

<sup>430</sup> See in detail: Nicolas Lowe, *The Classic Plot and the Invention of Western Narrative*, New York, 200, 72 f. A good example from exegetical studies can also be found in Athena Gorospe, *Narrative and Identity. An Ethical Reading of Exodus 4*, Leiden, 2007, 154 f.

<sup>431</sup> Jadunath Sarkar, *Ma’āsiri Ālamgiri*, I.

late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Mughal India. In the present case, this meant dealing with the problems of his protagonist (his illness and vulnerability) in the beginning of the chapter and the later loss of his troops. Within this Assamese setting, Musta‘idd Ḥān successfully demonstrated that he could embed the emperor’s illness into a larger picture. We find the illness in the beginning of the chapter, the gloomy setting of another hard campaign in the middle, in which they are challenged by an undefined and uncategorised threat (the poisonous air of Assam), and the death of his leading general and elite troops at the end. In this case, the mountain setting serves as the stage for Mughal losses, whereby the human tragedy, namely the vulnerability and weakness of the protagonist, is significantly relativised.

Musta‘idd Ḥān had to struggle with the emperor’s illness. As he could not skip this event, he somehow had to deal with the vulnerability and ordinary human suffering of the formerly mighty sultan, the legitimate ruler of the Mughals. He therefore decided to process this narrative break by adjusting the following setting to this event and to distract the recipient from the protagonist’s suffering. He could not have found a better place in which to embed this illness, and it is striking that Musta‘idd Ḥān picked up on a general narrative which circulated among Mughal troops at the time. According to one witness of the Mughal campaigns in around 1663, the climate of Koch Bihar, Kamrup, and Assam ‘(...) agrees with the natives, while it is rank poison to foreigners.’<sup>432</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān therefore clearly structured his work not only around dates, but also according to his individual intentions, in this case the need to frame the protagonist’s suffering. Musta‘idd Ḥān created a textual permanent state of emergency in a variety of ways. To do so, he used certain types of settings to portray Aurangzīb’s environment and that of his troops as a very threatening one. This, in combination with Aurangzīb’s constant victimhood, allowed our author to represent the latter’s often very controversial actions from an acquiescent and forgiving perspective. Thus the recipient’s pity for the protagonist increases considerably.<sup>433</sup>

Within the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, some specific settings such as the mountains, the night, the jungle, or the river were designed and arranged by the author in a decidedly menacing way, whereas other prominent Mughal chronicles portrayed these settings as peaceful, festive, and full of life.

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<sup>432</sup> Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*, 38.

<sup>433</sup> Verena Barthel, *Empathie, Mitleid, Sympathie. Rezeptionslenkende Strukturen mittelalterlicher Texte in Bearbeitungen des Willehalm-Stoffs*, Berlin, 2008.

In the last part of the analysis of dangerous settings, we will see that the author pushed this specific technique of contrasting his presentation with those of other Mughal chronicles to its limit, since the permanent state of emergency now bursts directly into the Mughals' paradise: Kašmīr.

## PART 2 - KAŠMĪR: THE MUGHALS' EXPULSION FROM PARADISE

In her recently published study on imperial identity in the Mughal Empire, Lisa Balabanlilar elaborates on the importance of the Kašmīri landscape as a crucial source of Mughal collective identity.<sup>434</sup> Owing to its natural features, Kašmīr has distinct parallels with the Fergana Valley, the Mughals' place of origin. Thanks to its mild climate, it became the summer retreat and spa of the Mughal nobles: 'Indeed, the Mughal attachment to the valley (Kašmīr) is often related to its being a kind of pre-modern tourist and health resort for burned-out emperors.'<sup>435</sup> This can be seen, for example, in the case of Aurangzīb's grandfather Ġahāngīr. Although physically difficult to reach, Kašmīr was the emperor's final destination: he died in 1627 in Saadabaad, close to the *Bāb-i Kašmīr*, the door to Kašmīr.<sup>436</sup> Abū l-Faẓl also mentioned that many wiseacres recommended to Akbar that he spend more months in the imperial paradise of Kašmīr in order to recover from his illness: Abū l-Faẓl believed that this posed the danger that the emperor might neglect his duties at the realm's centre.<sup>437</sup>

When we look at other writers, it soon becomes obvious that many of them felt the same way, since they gave a similarly wonderful picture of Kašmīr in their texts. The northern part of the empire was praised by chroniclers, travellers, musicians, and poets as paradise on earth. Nizāmī Rašīdī (1141-1209), certainly one of the greatest romantic epic poets of the Persian language and a reference point for many writers after him, celebrated Kašmīr in his *Iskandar-nāmeḥ* (1194 or 1196-1202) as a 'Paradise-like place, in which saffron, joy-exciting, is abundant.'<sup>438</sup> Later, Mīrzā Muḥammad Haydar Durġlāt Bīg (1499 or 1500-1551), the famous Chagatai Turko-Mongol general and ruler of Kašmīr, praised his realm in his *Tarīḥ-i Rašīdī* as 'wonderful'<sup>439</sup> and a 'specimen of Paradise.'<sup>440</sup>

<sup>434</sup> Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire*, 82.

<sup>435</sup> Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*, 36.

<sup>436</sup> Idem, 98.

<sup>437</sup> Idem, 103.

<sup>438</sup> Nizām ad-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ibn-Zakkī, *Sikandar nāma*, ed. and transl. Wilberforce Clarke, London 1881, chpt. 51.

<sup>439</sup> Mirza Haydar Durġlāt, *Tarikh-i-Rashidi (a History of the Ĥāns of Moghulistan)*, ed. and transl. by Wheeler Thackston, Cambridge, 1996, chpt. 32.

<sup>440</sup> Idem, chpt. 177.

Kašmīr's nature cast a spell over observers even if they were writing in the middle of troubled times and conflicts. This can be seen in the records of Abū l-Faẓl between 1587-1588, years that were marked by Akbar's expansionist dreams for the northern lands. More concretely, the emperor hoped to succeed in the prestigious reconquest of Transoxania, the symbolic homeland of his ancestors. However, once Kašmīr was incorporated into the Mughal realm in 1588, the campaign against the Peshawar tribes turned out to be much tougher than previously expected. Here, the Hindu Raja Beerbul, Akbar's friend and close confidante, lost his life, along with 40,000 men of the Mughals' northern army. Abū l-Faẓl, in spite of this disaster, still keeps on describing this land in eulogistic terms ('the delightful country of Cashmere').<sup>441</sup> Even Khāḡā 'Abd al-Karīm, while accompanying Nādir Shāh's invasion of Northern India and thus being in enemy territory, continues the narration of this inspiring landscape, celebrating Kašmīr as 'the semblance of the celestial Paradise.'<sup>442</sup>

Musta'idd Ḥān also describes this land as blessed, but in his own way. The *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*'s portrayal of Kašmīr had been analysed only once within the research literature, but without any deeper methodological approach: Sajida Alvi, in her important article on the three historians of Aurangzib's times, turned briefly to this section of our text. She did so, however, only to finally label the author as a poor chronicler who freely invented events to embellish his text without following the historical facts: 'Musta'id Ḥān has either overlooked many important events or given very brief information. On the contrary we find detailed information of an accident involving elephants in Pīr Panjāl Pass (...).'<sup>443</sup>

I disagree. Rather, as with so many other completely overlooked sections and symbols in our text, the Kašmīr scene in fact plays a crucial role within Musta'idd Ḥān's narrative strategy and helps us to unmask the text's normative meaning. Let us thus have a closer look at this precise section in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*:

(Aurangzīb) marched out of Bhimbar. While crossing the terrible Pīr Panjāl pass a frightened elephant turned back from the front and stampeded towards Bhimbar like a sudden calamity or a whirlwind; a terrible confusion befell the men and animals in that narrow pass. Some female elephants and some porters of the government fell into the pit of destruction and were so thoroughly crushed by the attack of this moving mountain that not to the speak of the men, not a bone of the elephants could be seen. On the occurrence of this terrible accident, the heart of the

<sup>441</sup> Beveridge, *The Akbarnama of Abūl-Faẓl*, vol. 3, chpt. 194

<sup>442</sup> Francis Gladwin (trans.), *The Memoirs of Khojeh Abdulkurreem*, Calcutta, 1788, London, repr. London 1907, chpt. 3.

<sup>443</sup> Alvi, *The Historians of Aurangzeb*, 69-70.

humble-cherishing Emperor was greatly grieved, and from that very time he resolved never again to visit Kaśmīr. (...) After enjoying the scenery of all the places of Kaśmīr, he set out from that abode of pleasure.<sup>444</sup>

The distinction of this passage from the prominent literary models cited above could not be clearer. It is obvious that our author wanted to banish Aurangzīb from the Mughal paradise. His protagonist, in marked contrast to his predecessors, finds no pleasure here and, for the time being, no rest either. Rather, the author destroys this peaceful image of Kaśmīr with a doomsday scenario which neither man nor animal could escape. What might have been the author's intention when he created this specific setting and how does it fit into his narrative strategy?

First of all, the Kaśmīr scene symbolises the text's dichotomy, its *prima facie* disunity: having read about this textual meat grinder, we find out only two phrases later that our protagonist 'enjoyed the scenery of all the places of Kaśmīr'. How does this fit with the excerpt we have just read? Instead of insinuating that our author lacked talent, as has been done so many times before, we should point out that this sentence serves to demonstrate the undisputed sovereignty of Aurangzīb. The trip to Kaśmīr immediately after this catastrophe took place should be seen as a specific way of demonstrating power: no disaster whatsoever will prevent the Mughal emperor from enjoying all parts of his kingdom whenever it suits him.

At the excerpt's beginning, the setting is described as being terrible. The mention of the first victims of threatening nature, the female elephants, is also remarkable. However, it is not only the author's emphasis on their feminine gender that catches the eye. The character of the elephant throughout the entire narrative is largely a positive one, as they are usually mentioned in peaceful settings and serve as important presents with a high symbolic meaning for other rulers.<sup>445</sup> With this in mind, we see that the author's decision to let some female elephants die has a much deeper meaning. It is evident that Musta'idd Ḥān used this effect to increase the recipient's pity and sympathy for Aurangzīb and his brave troops. Thus, nature in the narrative appears to be extremely violent and the protagonist's victimhood stands out particularly well.

Musta'idd Ḥān also designed the Kaśmīr scene in this way in order to highlight the protagonist's invulnerability on the one hand, and his sorrow for his soldiers and the common

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<sup>444</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 46 - 47; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āṣirī Ālamgīrī*, 28-29.

<sup>445</sup> I counted 229 passages in which an elephant is mentioned in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*. For peaceful descriptions of elephants, see e.g., 37 (twice mentioned), 46 (mentioned three times), 63, 70, 73, 78 (mentioned twice), 80, 87, 90, 96.

people ('some porters') on the other. While large parts of the army suffer significant losses and react in panic, Aurangzīb stands as an invincible and unwavering leader, as a calm anchor in the storm (in this instance, as with many others, we do not find any verbs of motion attributed to Aurangzīb). Additionally, it is here that Aurangzīb's direct emotions are mentioned for the first time in the text; significantly, these relate to his mourning about his subjects' deaths: 'The heart of the humble-cherishing Emperor was greatly grieved.'<sup>446</sup> Here the author announces, albeit very cautiously, another crucial part of his narrative strategy, namely to prepare the intended recipient for the protagonist's coming renunciation of the world. I will analyse this in the next chapter.

The Kašmīr section is also conspicuous because we cannot find any specific information on this event (May 1664) in the main source for the first ten years of Aurangzīb's reign, the *Ālamgīr-nāma* (we should remember that Muḥammad Kāẓim's *Ālamgīr-nāma*, which covers the first ten years of Aurangzīb's reign, was the prime source for Musta'idd Ḥān).

As the *Ālamgīr-nāma* is distinctive precisely because of its wealth of detail (each year is given 100 pages!), it is even more surprising that there is nothing to be found about this catastrophe. Of course, Kāẓim might simply have decided not to report it, which, however, seems implausible given the importance of such a disaster. It is more likely that this section could have been deleted at Aurangzīb's direct command, since the emperor insisted that each year's entry was read to him personally by the author: he thus acted as the text's main censor. It is most probable that Musta'idd Ḥān created this story on his own, without paying too much attention to the historical facts. However, this does not demonstrate his lower qualities as a chronicler; rather, he used this anecdote because it fits perfectly with his narrative strategy.

Finally, there might have been another, deeper reason for why our author chose the Mughal paradise for such a dramatic disaster while his main template says nothing about this event. If we take a comparative approach, we can find the answer in European literary history. It is interesting to see that this tendency of radically demarcating one's texts from prominent literary models, as Musta'idd Ḥān did in relation to the works by Abū l-Faẓl and other Mughal writers, took place in some parts of Europe. Here, in the midst of the eighteenth century, drama was the premier literary form. It was the golden age of German literature, in which young authors such as Goethe, Schiller, Herder, Hölderlin, and Lessing all reached new heights in their work by trying to establish an individual style. Representatives of the *Sturm*

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<sup>446</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āẓir-i Ālamgīrī*, 46

*und Drang* movement sought to distance themselves from the rational style characteristic of the Enlightenment.<sup>447</sup> In this context, John Pizer argues in his recent study on contemporary European writers that:

Most male authors (...) attempt to sustain one dominant narrative perspective, as well as absolute clarity concerning who is speaking to whom in their work, with the author's own voice at the top of a hierarchal chain. This rigid system of demarcation masks an attempt to oedipally vanquish the male author's predecessor, and it thus motivated by what Harold Bloom (...) famously called 'the anxiety of influence'.<sup>448</sup>

This tendency, I argue, fits our text and author as well when we take into account Musta'idd Ḥān's individual design of the Kaśmīr scene.

Additionally, if we remember the growing collective self-confidence of the author's milieu, namely that of the *munšīs*, it is even easier to assume that Musta'idd Ḥān indeed wanted to demarcate his text from some of his famous male predecessors in order to leave his own self-assured stamp within Mughal literary history.

#### HALFTIME: CONCLUSION ON THE DANGEROUS SETTINGS

The general setting of the *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī* must be identified as a dangerous one. The protagonist, his entourage, and his troops are constantly confronted with dangerous nature, which does not provide the Mughals with any assistance. In regards to Musta'idd Ḥān's attempt to create a permanent state of emergency and to portray Aurangzīb as the narrative's main victim in order to justify and condone his often controversial political actions in retrospect, the highly skilled arrangements of the settings are crucial.

By following our text so far, we have continually witnessed enemy attacks on the imperial troops from the mountains, the jungle, and the water, all too often using the cover of darkness. The more pages are turned, the more gruesome are the depictions of nature. We read about numerous natural disasters, monsters, and ominous signs in the night sky.<sup>449</sup>

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<sup>447</sup> Steve Giles, et al.(eds.), *Counter-Cultures in Germany and Central Europe. From Sturm und Drang to Baader-Meinhof*, New York, 2003; Alan Leidner (ed.), *Sturm und Drang*, New York, 1992; Rüdiger Safranski, *Romantik. Eine deutsche Affäre*, Munich, 2009.

<sup>448</sup> John Pizer, *Imagining the Age of Goethe in German Literature, 1970-2010*, Rochester, 2011, 38.

<sup>449</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 79, 111, 119-120, 132, 263 ff., 264/265.

Some settings even seem like a meat grinder, dragging thousands of Mughals to their deaths.<sup>450</sup>

It is clear that many of the sections discussed have a much deeper meaning than has been previously thought. This is evident, for example, in the analysis of the Kaśmīr settings, which occupies a crucial role within Musta‘idd Ḥān’s narrative strategy. This section has only been analysed previously to prove the low quality of Musta‘idd Ḥān’s historical work. Research dealing with the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, one of the most important sources on the second half of seventeenth-century Mughal India, has constantly overlooked how creatively and thoughtfully our author designed his work in order to guide his recipients through his narrative. Therefore I argue that these broadly analysed sections not only play a crucial role in the narrative strategy, but also unmask the text’s normative meaning. This also becomes evident in the section that tells us about the twelve mysterious Mughal fighters. This section, as has been shown, had a much deeper meaning and served primarily to catch the attention of Shia nobles of the post-1707 period and to react to Šāh Bahādur’s cautious approaches to the influential Shia centres of the empire.

The assumption that the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* is a text designed by representatives of the Muslim intellectual elite of Mughal India at the beginning of the eighteenth century that was solely addressed ultra-orthodox recipients and which celebrated an intolerant Muslim emperor who destroyed temples is therefore no longer sustainable. This being said, let us now look at those settings that are in sharp contrast to the threatening ones: the peaceful settings. They are far less numerous, but they nonetheless play a crucial role in terms of the author’s intention and the normative meaning of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*.

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<sup>450</sup> Yet another impressive example is Aurangzeb’s journey in June 1702, a detailed account of a seemingly never-ending ordeal suffered by the Mughals that lasts nearly four pages. 452-469.



## SECTION 2: THE PEACEFUL SETTINGS

*A short distance from here is a place named Ellora where in ages long past, sappers possessed of magical skill excavated in the defiles of the mountain spacious houses for a length of one kos. On all their ceilings and walls many kinds of images with lifelike forms have been carved.* - Mustai'dd Hān describes the Hindu temple complex Ellora.<sup>451</sup> - Mustai'dd Hān describes the Hindu temple complex Ellora.

*A (...) wonder (...) of the work of the true transcendent Artisan (az 'ā'ibāt-i šun '-i šāni '-i ḥaqīqī subḥānahu), in other words, a creation of God.* - Aurangzīb admires the Hindu temple of Ellora.<sup>452</sup>

### PRELUDE

In guiding his intended recipient through the narrative, the author also provided peaceful settings and places of relaxation.<sup>453</sup> Despite the fact that they are much less numerous and generally much shorter, they nevertheless play a crucial role in understanding the text's normative structure and our author's narrative strategy.

In the first section, it was shown that Musta'idd Hān specifically designed threatening settings to underpin his narrative strategy. In the coming section, I will address the question of why Musta'idd Hān also designed certain peaceful settings. Did these sections solely decorate the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* without any deeper meaning, an offence of which Musta'idd Hān has been previously accused?<sup>454</sup> Or is it not the case that behind these peaceful settings lies the author's clear intention and play an important function within his narrative strategy just as we have seen in the dangerous sections before?

Regrettably, these sections of the text have not been subjected to a detailed analysis. Indeed, it is on the basis of these peaceful settings that researchers of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* have claimed that Musta'idd Hān was a deficient chronicler. For instance, Sajida Alvi has argued in the most detailed analysis on the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* that 'we find detailed information of children playing in a village called Sonepat (...) or an elaborate note on Alamgir's hunting trip

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<sup>451</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 237-238; interestingly, precisely in this striking section, Sarkar did not use any specific vocabulary to let Musta'idd Hān's text sound more aggressive. Therefore, I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 145-146.

<sup>452</sup> Carl Ernst, 'Admiring the Works of the Ancients. The Ellora Temples as viewed by Indo-Muslim Authors', in, David Gilmartin and Bruce Lawrence (eds.), *Beyond Turk and Hindu. Rethinking Religious Identities in Islamicate South Asia*, New Delhi, 2002, 98-120.

<sup>453</sup> Good examples of peaceful settings can be found on 183-184, 188, and 201, the latter of which is the only peaceful description of the imperial army resting at a river. Within these settings, no conflicts can be found, like military ones or assassinations, nor do the conflicts become more pronounced, as is the case with Mu'azzam Sha's wedding mentioned above. Here, the author articulates, in a subtle manner, the forthcoming friction between father and son.

<sup>454</sup> See the mentioned studies of Alvi and Sarkar.

(...) All such details seem superfluous, particularly when we see the author giving little or no attention to historically crucial events.<sup>455</sup> Jadunath Sarkar emphasises that he deleted many of these positive settings within his own translation:

(...) But the prolix wording of some sentences has been replaced by a plain recital of their substance, and many trite reflections and moralisations (which are conventional in Persian historical literature at the beginning of a chapter or section) have been omitted altogether; also, verses and long laudatory phrases.<sup>456</sup>

Additionally, our text has served primarily to prove Aurangzīb's aggressiveness, the fundamentalism of his temple-destroying Muslim entourage and, logically, the hostile attitude of Musta'idd Ḥān as the author of the text and as a representative of Muslim intellectual elite at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The peaceful and supposedly historically irrelevant sections of the *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī* simply did not fit into the traditional image of Aurangzīb's rule. Once Jadunath Sarkar's translation presented the text to a broader audience in English, it was largely quoted solely to illustrate the battles against the Hindus and the destruction of their temples. In this way, the *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī* soon became the decisive evidence for the classical narrative of early modern India, proving that the self-imposed historiographical, literary, and cultural decline of the Mughals had already begun in the early eighteenth century thanks to Aurangzīb's intolerant government. There could be no better basis for this argument than an early eighteenth-century Muslim chronicle written immediately after Aurangzīb's death that was supported and accepted by powerful civil servants like 'Ināyat Allāh Ḥān and which primarily focused on discrimination against Hindus and the destruction of their temples. Heidi Pauwels has argued precisely in this direction in her otherwise important study, as she solely refers to Sarkar's translation and has thus accused Musta'idd Ḥān of giving a '(...) picture of religious polarization.<sup>457</sup>

Indeed, by only referring to Sarkar's translation, which is undoubtedly impressive from a philological perspective, one quickly receives the impression that the text merely functions as a long list of never-ending conflicts and punitive measures against infidels. Sarkar erased almost all of the poems, which often celebrated peaceful nature and the unity of man with the

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<sup>455</sup> Alvi, *The Historians of Aurangzeb*, 69-70.

<sup>456</sup> Sarkar, *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, VI.

<sup>457</sup> Heidi Pauwels, *A Tale of Two Temples*. 233. As said, this by no means is a general criticism of Heidi Pauwel's important article, as the author clearly contradicts the assumption that there had been a general, Muslim iconoclastic zeal in this period (Idem, 233). However, she still quotes Sarkar's translation from 1947 without taking into account the author's 'life setting' and the history behind the text, let alone the questionable qualities of Sarkar's studies. Both author and text thus still serve to provide an image of Aurangzeb's government as hostile to Hindus.

cosmos without any kind of violence,<sup>458</sup> and also included a detailed index of the numerous temple destructions, which thus emphasises these events to the reader. The praise of the Ellora temple, one of the most impressive achievements of Hindu architecture, the annual promotion of loyal Hindu noblemen, the often unorthodox symbols which litter the text, and the peaceful descriptions of the mosque were just interpreted as detours from the otherwise bellicose tone of the text. However, this completely overlooks a crucial part of Musta‘idd Ḥān’s narrative strategy: it is this which we now want to decipher in the coming section. Our first peaceful setting takes place in late summer 1683 in the ancient caves and monuments of Ellora, a masterpiece of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jainist architecture.

### ELLORA: A WONDERFUL HINDU TEMPLE

It is a strange irony of history that Musta‘idd Ḥān first mentions Ellora in his text in the twenty-seventh year of Aurangzīb’s rule (1683): exactly 300 years later, in 1983, this complex of 34 cave temples was made into a World Heritage Site. Ellora lies about 30 kilometres northwest of Aurangabad and was constructed between the fifth and the eleventh centuries CE. Its builders hollowed out a 2km-long piece of basaltic rock, extending from southeast to northwest, in a wonderful piece of Deccan architectural engineering. Musta‘idd Ḥān was reporting in the early 1680s at the height of Mughal expansion:

In the 1680s the Mughals were at the zenith of their power. In the south the Mughals were particularly triumphant: Bijapur was conquered in 1685, Golkonda in 1687 and the Maratha chief Sambhaji, Shivaji Bhonsle’s son, was executed in 1689. Four new provinces were added, together comprising more than one-quarter of the whole empire: Bijapur and the Bijapur Carnatic, and Hyderabad and the Hyderabad Carnatic. Although the Mughal frontier in the south was now coterminous with the furthest extent of Indian Muslim domination on the sub-continent, many areas within that frontier were still beyond the Mughal grasp. In the western Deccan, the Marathas managed to hold on to many of their mountain strongholds along the Western Ghats, their light horses still raiding the countryside far to its east and south. Hence, in order to eliminate the last remnants of Maratha power, Aurangzīb decided to remain in the Deccan for the next one-and-half decades.<sup>459</sup>

When Musta‘idd Ḥān stood in front of this impressive non-Muslim monument in 1683, his ‘setting in life’ was characterised by imperial expansion on the one hand and an

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<sup>458</sup> See Sarkar, *Ma‘āsiri Ālamgiri*, e.g. 66 (a whole page of poems at the chapter’s beginning), 138, 286, 387, 441, 514, 523.

<sup>459</sup> Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*, 187-188.

eternal state of emergency on the other. Let us now see how our author reflects on this split situation:

(...) As commanded by His Majesty, the advance tents of Shah 'Alam Bahadur came out of Aurangabad, playing sweet music, with the object of extirpating the enemy in the direction of Konkan (...) I shall now give some description of the tombs of the saints of the Faith and the village of Ellora. Eight kos from Aurangabad and three kos from the fort of Daulatabad are the blessed tombs of Shaikh Burhanuddin, Shaikh Zain-ul-Haq, Shaikh Muntakhabuddin Zarbakhsh, Mir Hasan of Delhi, Sayyid Raju, father of Mir Sayyid Muḥammad Gisudaraz and other knowers of God, many of whom were followers of Nizamuddin Aulia. These are places of pilgrimage to the world. These holy men came to this country and repose here, through the exertions of Muḥammad Shah Malik Juna, son of Tughlaq, who considered the fort of Deogiri the centre of his kingdom, named it Daulatabad, wished to make it his capital, and removed the people of Delhi with their families to this place. A short distance from here is a place named Ellora where in ages long past, sappers possessed of magical skill excavated in the defiles of the mountain spacious houses for a length of one kos. On all their ceilings and walls many kinds of images with lifelike forms have been carved. The top of the hill looks level, so much so that no sign of the buildings within it is apparent (from outside). In ancient times when the sinful infidels had dominion over this country, certainly they and not demons (jinn)\* were the builders of these caves, although tradition differs on the point. It was a place of worship of the tribe of false believers. At present it is a desolation in spite of its strong foundations; it rouses the sense of warning (of doom) to those who contemplate the future (end of things). In all seasons, and particularly in the monsoons, when this hill and the plain below resemble a garden in the luxuriance of its vegetation and the abundance of its water, people come to see the place.<sup>460</sup>

What struck me here, first and foremost, was the astonishing description of the Ellora temples and the positive picture of the Čištiyya order. How can it be that such a detailed and respectful narration appears in a text that generally serves as proof of Aurangzib's and Musta'idd Ḥān's allegedly orthodox and anti-Hindu attitude?

First of all, the author emphasises the fact that the Čištiyya holy men rest in *blessed tombs*. This is quite surprising. 'Ināyat Allāh Ḥān, the patron of the *Ma'āsiri-Ālamgīrī* and formerly close to Aurangzīb, could have insisted that the author portrayed this Sufi order (*tarīqa*) in a much more negative light if he had wished. Here, we need to remember that Aurangzib had sympathised with the rival branch of Naqshbandiyya from when he was a prince

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<sup>460</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āsiri-Ālamgīrī*, 237-238; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*.

The steady correspondence between Aurangzīb and the Naqshpandi master Khwaja 'Abd-ul-Ghaffar in the late 1640s includes communication about presents received and bestowed, military campaigns, and the comings and goings of specific traveling notables.<sup>461</sup>

If Musta'idd Ḥān sought to give a negative description of the Čišṭiyya order, there would certainly not have been a better opportunity to underline their heretical practices than this point, which would have served as an excellent juncture to equate them with the heretics and their non-Islamic actions. In regards to the allegedly ultra-conservative tone of the text, the remark about the 'blessed tombs' is indeed striking, as it contradicts such an interpretation. This debate about sacred tombs runs like a red thread through the intellectual history of Islam and currently is enjoying an enormous upswing. For some time now, Sunni hardliners have been preaching that the worship of objects, saints, and their graves should be judged as idolatry (*širk*)<sup>462</sup> and does not comply with Islamic law. Still today, this debate continues as some argue that veneration of the Prophet's tomb should be banned and its place destroyed.<sup>463</sup> However, our text certainly does not offer us such an ultra-conservative interpretation of the highly complex concept of *širk*.

In contrast, the tolerant, even admiring, tone towards this particular Hindu setting is notable. Although Musta'idd Ḥān still describes the builders of this site as 'sinful infidels' and a tribe of 'false believers',<sup>464</sup> it seems more likely that these were concessions to the conventions of the genre. As the official chronicler of Aurangzib's controversial government, our author simply could not break fully with the genre's standards, and it would have been virtually inconceivable for him to praise the builders of this temple more explicitly. However, as we shall see later on, Musta'idd Ḥān does not stop here, but rather endeavours to think *beyond Turk and Hindu*: the present setting is an excellent and fascinating opportunity to analyse and understand his specific way of writing. Although at first glance the roles of the ruling Mughals and the dominated Hindus, who are described here as 'false believers', remain

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<sup>461</sup> Faruqi, *Princes of the Mughal Empire*, 170.

<sup>462</sup> For the concept of *širk*, see Daniel Gimaret, 'širk', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Brill Online, 2013, <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2>, last accessed 8/07/2013; also Marco Schöller, *Yahyā ibn-Šaraf al-Nawawī. Das Buch der vierzig Hadithe. Kitāb al-arba'īn*, Frankfurt/Main, 2007, 15 f., 78, 82, 160, 183 f., 201, 259.

<sup>463</sup> A good historical overview on the Saudi destruction of Muslim historical sites can be found in TAM (The American Muslim), [http://theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/saudi\\_destruction\\_of\\_muslim\\_historical\\_sites1](http://theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/saudi_destruction_of_muslim_historical_sites1), last accessed January 2015.

<sup>464</sup> I strongly agree with Ernst's evaluation of Musta'idd Ḥān's description of the Ellora temples: 'In this passage the moralizing tone is almost a perfunctory note, inserted in what is for the most part an enthusiastic report'; idem, *Admiring the Works of the Ancients*, 113.

preserved: however, with a bit more effort, we might be able to decipher the author's intentions, in the light of which the text's message appears quite different.

To do so, I will return to the beginning of Aurangzīb's striking statement regarding the Ellora temple, which can be found in Aurangzīb's collected letters and speeches, the *Kalimat-i tayyibat*: 'A (...) wonder (...) of the work of the true transcendent Artisan (*az 'ā'ibāt-i šun '-i šāni '-i ḥaqīqī subḥānahu*), in other words, a creation of God.'<sup>465</sup> In the time of writing the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* (1707-1710), this collection of letters was still not finished and our author could not directly refer to it. However, it seems to me that Aurangzīb's admiration might have been familiar to Musta'idd Ḥān. This is not only because such a striking phrase most certainly circulated the court when Aurangzīb said it on his visit to Ellora: there is also the fact that it was the patron of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 'Ināyat Allāh Ḥān himself, who later collected Aurangzīb's letters and composed the *Kalimāt-i tayyibāt* in 1719.<sup>466</sup> We do not know the reason why 'Ināyat Allāh Ḥān included such a pro-Hindu letter in this important collection, as he generally was one of Aurangzīb's most influential hawks. However, while he has also been characterised as a blind admirer of Aurangzīb,<sup>467</sup> he could not ignore the fact that Aurangzīb often showed clemency towards the Hindus. His collection of Aurangzīb's words and letters would have been therefore incomplete without this prominent phrase. Thus, Inayat Allah Ḥān obviously had no problem with the way Musta'idd Ḥān inserted his description of Ellora into the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*. It seems to me that Musta'idd Ḥān sought to include at least some of Aurangzīb's admiration of the Ellora temple into his text: after all, the author could have completely omitted this extraordinary description if he perceived it as being inappropriate in terms of Islam. He could also have designed this description in a completely negative way. However, the author makes sure to give a positive closure to the description of the setting, where the location is defined as a wonderful place to visit, especially in monsoon season ('In all seasons, and particularly in the monsoons, when this hill and the plain below resemble a garden in the luxuriance of its vegetatiōri and the abundance of its water, people come to see the place').

Furthermore, with his explicit emphasis on the number of visitors ('These are places of pilgrimage to the world'), Musta'idd Ḥān wants to show that there were no sanctions against the ancient rituals of the Hindus, Buddhists, and Jainists, who evidently practised their faith freely under Aurangzīb's rule. It is striking that our author at no point advocates a violent

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<sup>465</sup> Ernst, *Admiring the Works of the Ancients*, 113.

<sup>466</sup> Haig, *The Cambridge History of India*, 583.

<sup>467</sup> Chandra, *Essays on Medieval Indian History*, 349.

crackdown against these religions and their places of pilgrimage. Therefore, I argue, the present setting served Musta‘idd Ḥān primarily as an appeal to loyal Hindus and their supporters at Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur’s court, in much the same way the story of the twelve brave Mughal soldiers was designed in order to win loyal Shiites over to his version of Aurangzīb’s reign.

Additionally, Musta‘idd Ḥān also sought to address directly his intended recipient, Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur, with this section. In that sense, the special character of the *Ma’āzīr-i ‘Ālamgīrī* as an agenda 1710 becomes apparent. It is clearly shown here that, although the chronicler does not understand or share the tradition and faith of the unbelievers, he does not demand the prohibition of their religious practices; it would seem evident that he perceives this as the ideal way to live together with Hindus in the empire. That Musta‘idd Ḥān was addressing this section directly to his new ruler is made clear by the fact that the author initiated the setting with Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur himself, who courageously marches into battle surrounded by ‘sweet music’, just two phrases before the same of the description of Ellora.<sup>468</sup> I will discuss the alleged ban on music in detail later. However, it is indeed noteworthy that the author places a delicate topic like music in direct connection with the intended recipient and, furthermore, immediately before the description of the Ellora temple.

Thus, Musta‘idd Ḥān launched this section with these specific effects in order to catch the new ruler’s attention by directly mentioning his name in connection with the exceedingly controversial aspect of music. In terms of the Ellora setting, Musta‘idd Ḥān, on just a single page, cleverly combines delicate aspects which had led to many controversies under Aurangzīb: music (in direct connection with the intended recipient) and the handling of non-Muslim religions (by means of the Ellora setting).

With respect to the analysis of the recipient, it is crucial that the character Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur himself stands before these two delicate issues without any sign of wanting to ban them. Rather, we are told that there is music present in the context of victory and triumph, while non-Muslim religions are described with respect and a special reference to the architecture of Ellora. Within the Ellora section, all of three of these aspects (the intended recipient, music, and the architectural and cultural characteristics of non-Muslim religions) appear in a very good light. It is evident that the Ellora section is idealised so that it can function as a mirror for the new ruler in 1707, who is expected to strictly observe the setting’s key message: a

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<sup>468</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma’āzīr-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 237.

strong emperor, whose power is symbolised by his confident march into battle, should seek the peace of the empire and not hesitate to act in its defence. Although Islam is clearly the true religion, one must treat other religions with gentleness and tolerance: delighting in the finer things of life, be they music or art like the architectural achievements of infidels, goes hand in hand with this way of governing.

However, this respectful description of the images and cultural achievements of other religions was by no means the rule in the seventeenth century. It is useful to take a broader perspective and look at contemporaneous Europe, which in this period was deeply divided in terms of religion. The debate on the sacred function of the image and constant iconoclasms reached far into the seventeenth century.<sup>469</sup> However, we see the opposite in our text. Here, Musta‘idd Hān reverently reports this example of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jainist architecture, and describes the many human-sized images without suggesting that they ought to be destroyed or painted over. Although he certainly does not believe in the religious function of images, judging their worship to be an infidel act, his description of the Ellora temples still leaves the impression that he entered this place with a considerable amount of respect which he subsequently sought to insert into his text.

Musta‘idd Hān also shows his estimation of the Ellora temples by the fact that he gave this setting in an extraordinary amount of length and detail in an otherwise very concise text. Not only does the description take nearly two pages, but he also offers a historical precedent in the form of Muḥammad Shah Malik Juna, the former ruler of the Delhi Sultanate. Through this reference, Musta‘idd Hān makes it clear how much he was striving to adhere to historical facts and to be as well informed as possible during the writing of his draft, as he expressly states at the beginning of chapter 11. In this sense, it is obvious that our author did not just want to mention the Ellora temples in a subordinate clause. Rather, the author arranged this important section in detail and provided correct historical references. With the decision to describe the Ellora temples in this particular way, his distinct curiosity towards religions, cultures, and events beyond the Mughal horizon is revealed. This is of great importance, as this concept of early modern curiosity is still too often limited to contemporary Europe: in contrast, non-European societies are held to have stagnated and have been closed to modern innovations.

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<sup>469</sup> Norbert Schnitzler, *Ikönoklasmus. Bildersturm. Theologischer Bilderstreit und ikonoklastisches Handeln während des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, Munich, 1996, 138 f.



In terms of its function, the present setting, with its detailed illustration, its historical precedents, and its context, is of great importance for the author's narrative strategy and indeed should be understood as an appreciation of this outstanding temple complex. Musta'idd Hān could have easily skipped this setting, as it ultimately has no historiographical value, as Sajida Alvi complains. He could have also described it with contempt or boredom. However, the length of the description, his efforts to correctly embed it into the appropriate historical context, and the anecdote's conclusion suggest that Musta'idd Hān was quite serious in his description of this crucial pilgrimage site of the Hindus, Buddhists, and Jainists. I therefore argue that Musta'idd Hān wanted to show that members of non-Islamic religions, even if they did not belong to the *ahl al-kitab* and thus were not directly under the protection of Islam, could nevertheless practise their religion under Aurangzib's rule. This description of the latter's rule as being more open minded than is suggested by his opponents continues in the next section, which discusses the author's description of Aurangzib's official coronation.

### AURANGZĪB'S OFFICIAL CORONATION

In May 1659, the second postponed coronation took place. It is the longest and most detailed description of a peaceful setting in the first ten years of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*:

At the first auspicious coronation celebrations had been greatly curtailed on account of the expedition into the Panjab and also want of leisure, the reading of the ḥutbah, the stamping of coins, and the proclamation of the Emperor's title had been completed, he ordered his officers to make preparations for the coronation celebrations, and they did their best. An eloquent ḥatib ascended the pulpit and read an impressive ḥutbah, and he was rewarded to his heart's content. Such quantities of gold and silver coins were distributed in the name of the Emperor that the wide bag of hope was filled by picking them up. The courtiers bowed to do honour, and sang the praises of and prayed for the emperor. The doors of imperial treasuries were opened to all people; and the expectations of all, young and old, were fulfilled. In former times the sacred *Qur'ānic* credo (kalm) used to be stamped on gold and silver coins, and such coins were constantly touched with the hands and feet of men; Aurangzib said that it would be better to stamp some other word on coins. At this time Mīr 'abd al-Bāqī, surnamed Suhbay, showed the following couplet of his own composition: 'King Aurangzib 'Ālamgīr stamped coins, in the world, like the bright full moon. The Emperor liked it (...) The emperor with open-handed liberality gave grand rewards to the princes, bīgūms and imperial handmaids; every one of the nobles and faithful servants received promotion and the title according to his rank;

pious and religious men, poets, musicians and singers received suitable rewards and gifts.<sup>470</sup>

After more than 20 pages, this is the first time after the war of succession that the reader is confronted with such a detailed account of royal pleasures: hunting, travelling, and the emperor's desire to celebrate. In terms to its length and content, this setting certainly stands out from the rest of the narrative. It is conspicuous that all types of figure are mentioned within this setting and that all of them are very active. They participate in the celebrations, and the reader explicitly learns about their intentions. The author emphasises their industriousness in the preparations for the celebration ('the officers did their best').<sup>471</sup>

Such a large number of different characters within one setting is certainly exceptional in the *Ma'āsiri-i 'Ālamgīrī*.<sup>472</sup> Pious men and generals, women and musicians, all of them are mentioned within the same setting: above them all stands Aurangzīb, the celebrated emperor. It can thus be argued that the extensive action of several characters in a peaceful and relaxed setting like Aurangzīb's coronation shows Musta'idd Hān's ideal and what he therefore sought to demonstrate to his intended recipient. Finally, there is no conflict disturbing the court's harmony. Each figure identifies him- or herself with the setting and is willing to contribute to the plot. In this particular setting, Aurangzīb clearly portrays himself as the legitimate king not only of pious Muslims, but also of all kinds of subjects, including Hindus, some of whom are promoted at the end of the year.<sup>473</sup> The recipient is thus confronted with a unique atmosphere of collective action, peaceful emotion, and opulent fragrances.

Before I analyse the moon poem in detail and its meaning for Musta'idd Hān's narrative strategy, I would like to stress briefly yet another problematic point of Jadunath's translation. While his work is an example of the highest level of philological scholarship, he nevertheless guides the reader in his translation in the wrong direction, one which is diametrically opposed to Musta'idd Hān's intentions. While Sarkar sprinkles his translation with remarks and footnotes to denote errors in the edited version and manuscript he used, he totally fails to give any explanation of the present event and neglects to even give a hint about what the moon poem might have meant for Musta'idd Hān and his intended recipients. For readers with less knowledge of Islāmic culture and history, the present poem is hard to understand. However,

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<sup>470</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āsiri-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 23; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri 'Ālamgiri*, 13-14.

<sup>471</sup> See Margit Pernau's important study on the Muslim educated middle class in nineteenth-century Delhi, Margit Pernau, *Bürger mit Turban. Muslime in Delhi im 19. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen, 2008.

<sup>472</sup> It must be said that several different characters are also present in threatening and wartime settings; however, they are exclusively male, with the single exception of the counselling function of Dārā's women, see Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āsiri-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 16.

<sup>473</sup> Idem, 27.

Aurangzīb's two other ventures in the present quotation are much easier to grasp for the reader of Sarkar's translation. Our author reports that Aurangzīb substituted the former Qur'ānic credo (*kalma*) that was usually stamped on silver and gold coins for the moon poem, arguing that the holy *kalma* should not be touched by people's unwashed hands.<sup>474</sup> Then, just a couple of phrases later, Aurangzīb promoted '(...) Mulla Awz Waḡī', the chief of the learned men, (as a) censor, and instead of an annual stipend of 15,000 rupees, he was given the manṣāb of a hazari (100 tr.)'.

For the reader of Sarkar's translation, it becomes clear that these are the first signs of forthcoming Islamic fundamentalist rule in India. I argue, however, that this crucial part of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* must be read differently; it is here where the moon poem comes into play. In fact, it is striking that no study dealing with Aurangzīb's reign has ever carefully analysed this second coronation with a deeper methodological approach. Most probably, given that the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* has been condemned for being boring and its overabundance of oriental enthusiasm, it is hard for people to take it seriously unless they want to use it to prove Aurangzīb's fundamentalist Islāmic rule. Mīr 'Abd al-Bāqī's poem, which is placed on Aurangzīb's freshly stamped coins, has therefore been left out.<sup>475</sup>

Given that this moon poem, which is emphasised at such a prominent occasion (this is a coronation, and the stamping of new coins was a major factor in the legitimisation of pre-modern kingship) and at such an important point in the text, it seems very plausible that our author wanted to stress the fact that new emperor hoped to address more people than just Sunni Muslim subjects. This becomes clear when we look at the cultural and symbolic meaning of the moon within the Muslim 'Umma.

Interestingly, the moon has generally been a symbol and tool for peaceful dialogue between Hindus and Muslims: it was mainly utilised by the Ṣūfī orders, which placed the moon at the centre of their practice.<sup>476</sup> As Sura 54:1 indicates, the Prophet split the moon with his finger.<sup>477</sup>

<sup>474</sup> 'In former times the sacred Qur'ānic credo (kalm) used to be stamped on gold and silver coins, and such coins were constantly touched with the hands and feet of men; Aurangzīb said that it would be better to stamp some other word on coins.

<sup>475</sup> See for example John Richard's section on the second coronation, Richard, *The Mughal Empire*, 161.

<sup>476</sup> See in detail Samer Akkach, *Letters of a Sufi scholar. The Correspondence of 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1641-1731)*, Leiden, 2010, 94 f. and Annemarie Schimmel, *Die Träume des Kalifen. Träume und ihr Deutung in der islamischen Kultur*, Munich, 1998.

<sup>477</sup> Regarding the religious and theological meaning of the moon in Islām, see first of all Daniel Martin Varisco, 'Moon' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, Leiden, 2007, vol. 3, 414-416; also Maxime Rodinson, 'La lune chez les Arabes et dans l'Islam' in *La Lune, Mythes et Rites*, Paris, 1962, 151-215; Joseph Schacht and Richard Ettinghausen, 'Hilal', in Peri Bearman/et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Brill Online, 2013, <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2>, last accessed 9/19/2012.

this narrative led the Indian king Schakrawarti Farmad to accept Islām, as the South Indian legend says proudly.<sup>478</sup> The moon is the symbol of beauty: to compare a beloved woman to the shining moon is the highest praise you can give. Whether it is a *badr*, a full moon, or the slender new moon, *hilāl*, the moon brings joy. Even today, Muslims (Sunni and Šī'a alike) say a little prayer or poem when they spot a new moon for the first time: they look at a nice person or something golden, and express good wishes in the hope that the whole month will be beautiful.

It is also said that the great Indian Šūfi Nizām ad-Dīn Awliyā' (died 1325) laid his head at his mother's feet when the new moon appeared in the sky out of reverence for the lunar orb and his pious mother. Poets have written countless works about the moon, particularly the crescent moon at the end of the fasting month. A long article could be filled with the lovely comparisons they have invented, as moon poems often deal with erotic content. The moon is a symbol of human beauty, but also of unattainable divine beauty, which is reflected everywhere:

The old East Asian wisdom saying that the moon is reflected in every kind of water has found its way into the Islāmic tradition, such as the poems of Rumi. And some Turkish Šūfis have even found a relationship between the words of Allah, *hilaal*, 'Nine Moon,' and *laalah*, 'Tulip,' which are all made from the same letters a-l-l-h and therefore are mysteriously interconnected.<sup>479</sup>

Given that the moon within Islāmic culture is a general symbol of joy, divine and human beauty, and the prime object of reverence and worship for the Šūfis, the classic counterparts of Islāmic orthodoxy, the poem and its inclusion on coins is certainly not a sign of a forthcoming fundamentalism. This is all the more true if we add the fact that the moon, in the Indian context, symbolised an intellectual dialogue between Hindus and Muslims. It is therefore striking that Aurangzīb welcomes a moon poem that equates the Mughal Empire's new currency with an unorthodox and peaceful symbol that certainly did not stand for the superiority of his religion. Additionally, he uses the coronation, a crucial event for publically displaying his power, to present the new design to the public.

Another point must be mentioned. It has already been shown that the setting of the night was clearly the sphere of Aurangzīb's enemies and was constantly avoided by imperial troops if possible. If we take this into account, the emperor's new coins evidently bring light into the

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<sup>478</sup> The following examples are based on Annemarie Schimmel, *Die Zeichen Gottes. Die religiöse Welt des Islam*, Munich, 1995, 34 f.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid.

generally threatening setting of the darkness. The moon poem, embedded in such a harmonious setting, is thus directly connected to dangerous nocturnal settings. Therefore, the moon, now embodied in the emperor's new currency, functions as a direct counterpoint to the dark and gloomy settings in which Musta'idd Hān usually placed Aurangzīb's enemies. The threatening night and the bright symbol of the moon thus complement each other and fulfil a dual legitimisation of Aurangzīb's rule.

Additionally, the moon poem's position<sup>480</sup> within the second coronation is noteworthy. Here, Musta'idd Hān placed 'Abd al Bāqī's verses *before* the allegedly important promotion of Mullā Awz Waḡī' as the new censor. Surprisingly enough, this new office is mentioned only very briefly and at the end of the celebrations in a single subordinate clause. Furthermore, immediately after Waḡī's new office is quickly mentioned, a conflict bursts into the celebrations, namely the betrayal of Aurangzīb's son Prince Muḥammad Ṣulṭān and his desertion to Ġūḡā'. The author presents this flight in a very cold and detached style; however, he clearly expresses his grudge against the prince's action, assigning him a special place: as with so many enemies of Aurangzīb before, Muḥammad Ṣulṭān now fled '(...) by boat.'<sup>481</sup>

Therefore, the newly created office of the censor is not well positioned in the description of the coronation of Aurangzīb, nor is it given any specific attention. Simply put, if Musta'idd Hān considered the creation of Waḡī's office, an act which has generally been used to prove Aurangzīb's supposedly incipient fundamental orientation,<sup>482</sup> as the most important act of Aurangzīb's new government, he would have clearly placed it directly at the beginning, and not at the end, of the setting, and certainly not after Abdul Bāqī's moon poem. Hence,

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<sup>480</sup> Regarding the importance of an episode's position within a narrative see Forian Kragl, 'Sind narrative Schemata 'sinnlose' Strukturen?', in *Historische Narratologie*, 307-338, 329.

<sup>481</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 25.

<sup>482</sup> Regarding this new office, John Richard argues: 'At his second coronation in 1659, Aurangzīb created a new office, the muhtasib or censor, appointed from the ranks of the ulema. This peculiarly Islamic officer regulated urban markets to prevent disorder and fraud on the public. The muhtasib also enforced Sharia prohibitions against blasphemy, wine-drinking and gambling, and other heretical or idolatrous behavior in public. Previously unknown in Indian regimes, the muhtasib assumed some of the duties of the indigenous Indian city magistrate, the kotwal. Aurangzīb appointed Mulla Auz Wajih, Shah Jahan's former jurisconsult (mufti), a prominent Muslim theologian from Samarkand, chief muhtasib bearing the rank of an amir at Delhi'. Richard, *The Mughal Empire*, 174. Muzaffar Alam contradicts Richard's rather traditional argument. See idem, *The Languages of Political Islam*, 195-196. Here, the author judges the muhtasib-office in a more moderate way. 'The significant point here is that, according to the Naqshbandi Sufi tradition, what the muhtasib tried to do was in complete accord with Islamic tenets. But, according to the Chisti tradition, the very act of the muhtasib caused the downfall of an 'Islamic' power. Thus we can see that there was no single dominant Islamic tradition or any single reading of the shari'a which shaped and determined the course of Muslim polity in pre-colonial India. In fact, different Islamic traditions were often at loggerheads with one another. The umma was rarely united in historical Islam.' p. 195. On the emperor's struggle with a powerful orthodox elite, see also Bhatia, *The Ulema, Islamic Ethics and Courts under the Mughals*.

Waḡī‘’s new office, in Musta‘idd Ḥān’s narrative, served the author as a brief transition in the narrative to the discussion of the betrayal of the emperor’s son.

The second coronation is certainly one of the longest peaceful parts of the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. Generally, the settings of peace and relaxation are very short, usually around two lines. Within the first ten years, these peaceful settings the mosque,<sup>483</sup> Aurangzīb’s hunting lodge,<sup>484</sup> a house-warming party of a friendly nobleman honoured by Aurangzīb’s personal appearance,<sup>485</sup> and the emperor’s visits to gardens.<sup>486</sup> These relaxed and peaceful settings are generally placed in the narrative’s beginning or in the first half of a year, but never at the end of it.<sup>487</sup> At this point, the mosque’s role should briefly be highlighted, as it differs considerably from all other kinds of setting, both the peaceful and negative ones.

## THE MOSQUE

From the third year onwards, the mosque is generally placed at the beginning of each year and is linked with Aurangzīb’s annual giving of alms or festivities where joyous music often is played.<sup>488</sup> But, and this cannot be overstated, it is never mentioned in the context of military deliberations or the planning of campaigns against non-Muslim societies. Of course, Aurangzīb’s almsgiving certainly serves a political action and is crucial for the legitimisation of his rule. Although the mosque setting does play an important role when they are built on the grounds of allegedly destroyed Hindu temples, these mosques are needed for incoming soldiers in conquered enemy territory and thus are mentioned in the context of the empire’s expansion. In the eleven problematic sections which report destroyed Hindu temples,<sup>489</sup> we must once again recall Eaton’s reasoning and take the multiple authorship of this text into consideration.

Given that the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* is generally perceived as important textual proof of fundamentalist Islam in late seventeenth-century India, one might expect the mosque to have

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<sup>483</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 32.

<sup>484</sup> Idem, e.g., 59.

<sup>485</sup> Idem, e.g., 73.

<sup>486</sup> Idem, e.g., 10.

<sup>487</sup> The standard work is Barbara Smith, *Poetic Closure. A Study How Poems End*, Chicago, 1968; see also Eyal Segal, *Narrativity and the Closure of Event Sequences*, in *Amsterdam International Electronic Journal for Cultural Narratology* ([http://cf.hum.uva.nl/narratology/a07\\_segal.htm](http://cf.hum.uva.nl/narratology/a07_segal.htm), last accessed 20/12/2014; idem, *The 'Tel Aviv School'. A Rhetorical-Functional Approach to Narrative*, in *Current Trends in Narratology*, Greta Olson (ed.), Berlin, 2011, 297-311, 305 f.

<sup>488</sup> Good examples of the mosque’s peaceful function are Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 17, 29, 31, 41, 48, 49, 70, 72, 78, 80, 82, 99, 107, 119, 124, 125, 127, 128, 130, 131, 154, 155 (twice), 166 (twice), 210, 211, 225, 230, 236, 246, 343, 346, 350, 372, 381, 393, 403, 409, 410, 424, 507, 525.

<sup>489</sup> Idem, 52, 83, 95, 96, 175, 344, 396, 428, 507, 528, 529.

quite a different role within the narrative. However, given that there are 44 peaceful descriptions of the mosque that often include almsgiving and music against eleven sections where the mosque is directly involved in power and politics, it is obvious that the author paid particular attention to the mosque as a place of prayer rather than as a meeting room for military and political campaigns. Regarding the author's narrative strategy, it is striking that even if the mosque is mentioned within the context of power and anti-Hindu actions, it never happens in direct connection with the protagonist himself. Musta'idd Hān, therefore, strives to separate his protagonist, as the ideal Muslim ruler, from these critical sections as well as he could.

This being said, within the *Ma'aṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, the mosque is, first and foremost, a place of meeting with God; however, it is also a place of peace, silence, and community spirit (the settings that follow the mosque's description usually deal with Aurangzīb's almsgiving or public festivities). The mosque is also very often the only conflict-free setting within a year, with the exceptions of the annual public promotions of Aurangzīb's nobles.

The mosque thus appears as a setting in which the narrative stands still while the figures, especially the protagonist himself, seek reinforcement before being forced to react to several external conflicts. This is also true for the other peaceful settings mentioned above. However, what distinguishes them from the mosque setting is that the figures here (e.g. in Aurangzīb's hunting lodge) are not isolated from the ongoing external struggles. Too often, the political and military conflicts burst into these settings, as is the case with the garden where Aurangzīb often receives generals to discuss important decisions regarding military campaigns.<sup>490</sup> Together with the hunting lodge or the royal court, these settings are therefore mixed up with threatening actions and settings. Nevertheless, they still function as peaceful settings, as they are mostly connected with royal pleasure and the joy of the characters: no direct fighting takes place.

Another unique feature of the mosque setting is the involvement of the narrative's figures. We will see later that women can also take part in a military campaign by counselling Dārā. Aurangzīb's Hindu generals also win decisive battles for their Muslim emperor. The threatening war settings are therefore full of different characters; however, they are mainly male figures. In regard to the mosque setting, this is truly Aurangzīb's domain and that of his very closest entourage. However, even though Aurangzīb is often accompanied by other

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<sup>490</sup> See, for example, idem, 45 for the garden's political function: both, the preparation for the imperial festivities and the public mourning after Mīr Ġumla's death, are held in a specific garden.

nobles entering the mosque, it is important to note that, in the 500 pages of the narrative, no character other than Aurangzīb prays to God: it is thus obvious that the author insisted that only the emperor could come into direct contact with God.

It must also be mentioned that the mosque is mentioned only very late in the text; strikingly, it is not even referred to during the second coronation, a setting of the utmost importance. The first time Aurangzīb turns directly to God, he is not praying in the mosque, but isolated on the battlefield. In the battle with Šāh Ğūğā‘ at Ḥawa on 5 January 1659, Aurangzīb was ‘relying on providence’;<sup>491</sup> as a reward, they won the battle through ‘the aid of heaven’. The author thus makes his point early on that the mosque would be separated from war settings.

On the other hand, the author also used the setting of the mosque in order to widen the gap between the protagonist and his rivals, and to underline the protagonist’s civilising character and the barbarousness of his enemies. In the same year as Šāh Ğūğā‘’s escape to Arakan, Aurangzīb on the morning of the ‘id day ‘(...) went to the mosque (...)’;<sup>492</sup> whereas Ğūğā‘, at the end of the same page, is ‘(...) entrapped in the snare of that land of infidels.’<sup>493</sup> Aurangzīb, again, enters a civilised, quiet, and blessed setting, while his opponent gets lost in the unknown and threatening wilderness.

While Ellora and Aurangzīb’s coronation were designed as truly peaceful settings where no conflict bursts into their joyous and calm atmosphere, the aforementioned setting of the mosque is occasionally intertwined with power and politics. In the final section of this chapter, it will be shown that the author mixes peaceful settings with threatening ones as a crucial part of his narrative strategy: in this way, he portrays the protagonist’s often criticised actions and decisions from the victim’s point of view.

### MĪR ĞUMLĀ’S INTERMINGLED SETTING

In early January 1662, Aurangzīb’s leading general Mīr Ğumlā set out on his final campaign against the Assamese. Our excerpt takes place in Aurangzīb’s court at the end of the fourth year of his reign, where the emperor receives the dispatches of Ḥān-i Ḥānan and his ‘famous victory’.<sup>494</sup> Aurangzīb sends a letter to Mīr Ğumlā in response, praising him and his son by presenting each of them with a robe. At first glance, this appears to be quite a positive report, as the author relates a victory. However, we will see in a moment that this event shows certain

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<sup>491</sup> Idem, 15.

<sup>492</sup> Idem, 30.

<sup>493</sup> Idem, 31.

<sup>494</sup> Idem, 40.



parallels with conflict-ridden settings. Musta‘idd Hān writes:

I cannot describe in detail what the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma* gives fully, namely, the great designs of the faithful army, their exertions and hardships in this campaign through extreme devotion and fidelity to the Emperor, the capture of countless spoils consisting of all kinds of things, money and other articles, nor describe here the wonders, rarities, strange things, and precious objects (...) comprising the animate creation, the varieties of trees, fruits, and plants, plains and rivers, food and dress, forts and houses of these countries.<sup>495</sup>

Let us start with the setting’s position in the narrative itself. After 40 pages have been turned, the recipient is finally confronted with a truly happy end: no news of a sudden death, a rebellion, or a natural catastrophe is mentioned. Indeed, everything seems to be fine. We read about the emperor’s happiness at the outcome of the battle. We also recognise a further important aspect which is often mentioned in other peaceful settings: the curiosity towards strange things, in this case the conquered countries of Kuch Bihar and Assam. These are in fact so unusual and interesting that Musta‘idd Hān expressly indicates that one must read further about them in the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*’s much more detailed descriptions

However, as on so many occasions before, Aurangzīb’s expectations have not been met. As in the example above (where the celebration was suddenly interrupted by the betrayal of the emperor’s son Prince Muḥammad Ṣulṭān), the peaceful atmosphere at the end of the fourth year does not last long. In the next few pages, the emperor fell ill himself; then, two pages later, we notice the imperial army struggling with the sinister poisoned air in Assam. Finally, the year ends with the death of Aurangzīb’s best general Mīr Ğumlā.

It is striking that in the present section the author actually predicted what was awaiting the imperial troops in Assam nearly a year later. Not only does he emphasise the ‘(...) exertions and hardships (...)’ of the elite troops, but also that this campaign had not yet come to an end, mentioning the country’s ‘(...) strange things (...)’ What these wonders and strange things actually meant only becomes clear to the recipient shortly afterwards.

It is exactly this intermingling of the narrative’s material that makes this section so important. On the one hand, we witness the general’s great victory and the resulting relief and festivities at Aurangzīb’s court. On the other, the setting is strongly connected with military issues because it is ultimately disturbed by next year’s conflicts. Additionally, the intended recipient must have known that the Assam campaign had not yet come to an end on this page, given

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<sup>495</sup> Ibid.; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma‘āsiri Ālamgiri*, 24.

that the enigmatic and popular general Mīr Ğumlā, one of the most remarkable personalities in seventeenth-century India, will be struck by a fatal affliction just a few months later. Plus, after reading or listening to around 40 pages of the chronicle, the recipient has already acquired relevant experience of the text. He was therefore prepared for the narrative's next catastrophe, which happened immediately on the following page.

This setting, which looks at first glance to be nothing more than the celebration of a victory, appears on a closer inspection in a completely different light, as the author used the same technique generally applicable to the threatening sections to create a certain type of tension; namely, trying to keep the addressee's attention for any length of time. As was the case in the section about the twelve Mughals, in which the recipients had to be kept in suspense for the next few pages, this section is not told in sequence. The section's termination has to do with the structure of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*; there are several examples in which Musta'idd Ḥān used the techniques of *analepse* (flashback)<sup>496</sup> and *prolepse* (preview),<sup>497</sup> although he simply could have told the story in one piece. Hence, Mīr Ğumlā's victory, at first sight a joyous event for the imperial forces, stands out in terms of the other peaceful settings, as it contains crucial parallels to the dangerous settings, particularly in the author's use of tension. This intermingling of peaceful and threatening settings therefore plays a crucial role in Musta'idd Ḥān's narrative strategy, since it is fundamental in creating a permanent state of emergency. It enables him to design Aurangzīb's actions and critical decisions from the victim's perspective and to portray the empire as the victim of constant external threats.

## CONCLUSION

The peaceful settings of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* are generally very short. Nevertheless, they fulfil a decisive function in regards to Musta'idd Ḥān's narrative strategy. While, the recipient is generally confronted with the much longer threatening settings, the short, quiet, and peaceful settings constantly replace them: the recipient's emotions are thus being tossed up and down. The tension increases and attention remains high.

Furthermore, the peaceful settings also serve as an important literary device that Musta'idd Ḥān often applied to contrast the characteristics of the protagonist and his enemies by equating the character's virtues with their chosen setting.

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<sup>496</sup> For an analepse see e.g.: 'It happened by chance that when Firuz Jang was staying at Rasulpur in the environs of Bijapur (...)', idem, 199.

<sup>497</sup> For a prolepse see e.g.: 'His fate will be narrated in the proper place, idem, 31.

For example, while Aurangzīb (disciplined) at the beginning of the year visits the mosque (civilised) by himself, his opponent (wild), at the bottom of the same page, steps into the infidels' trap and the wilderness (uncivilised).

In the present analysis of the peaceful settings, I primarily demonstrated that these settings in no way serve simply as decorations in a text otherwise dominated by permanent conflicts and threatening sections. However, until the present analysis on the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, these sections have been completely ignored because the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* has long been quoted to demonstrate the allegedly numerous temple destructions of Aurangzīb and his fanatical Muslim entourage. Peaceful descriptions of a Hindu temple, specific symbols possibly addressed to Šī'ite recipients within so decisive a setting as Aurangzīb's coronation, and a mosque setting which Musta'idd Ḥān largely isolated from politics and violence simply did not fit into the predominantly conservative research paradigm, which, over the years, has constructed a one-sided picture of Aurangzīb, his followers, and his times.

In fact, these sections are crucial elements of the text with which Musta'idd Ḥān repeatedly tried to present a different reading of Aurangzīb's reign. This, for example, is illustrated when Musta'idd Ḥān writes about the '*blessed tombs*' of the Čiṣṭiyya order, the diametric opposites of the ultra-conservative interpretation of Islam to which Aurangzīb and his advisors have always been accused of subscribing. It is no different with the impressive description of the Ellora setting. This section reveals, through a close reading, the author's real intention; that the latter did not seek to describe the reign of his patron as one of never-ending violence against the Hindus. It most certainly was not a text aimed at celebrating violent crackdowns against non-Muslim groups which were then used as crucial parts of the legitimisation of the rule of a just Muslim ruler. On the contrary: the descriptions of the Ellora temples probably allowed Musta'idd Ḥān to address potential Hindu noble recipients, who, at the end of Aurangzīb's reign, enriched the royal court with their presence. It was crucial for the author, who had for years socialised in the culturally-mixed milieu of the *munšīs*, not to frighten these influential nobles, but rather to win them over to his own version of Aurangzīb's reign. In addition, in the analysed peaceful settings, the author's cultural curiosity is revealed to his intended recipient and modern readers. This is especially the case within the Ellora setting, which stands out in terms its length and its unusual content, and in Mir Jumla's intermingled setting where his victory in Assam is described.

All of these sections quite obviously corresponded with the social ideal of the *munšī* Musta'idd Ḥān. This is also evident in the function of the mosque setting. Here, our author

designed a setting which served as Aurangzīb's only area of peace and tranquillity, isolated from the wars and politics in most of the rest of the text. Additionally, the mosque setting is mentioned only very late in the text. All of this is of great importance when we consider that our text is primarily used as decisive textual evidence of a fundamentally aggressive Islam under Aurangzīb. Therefore, Musta'idd Ḥān, as a representative of the Muslim elite of the Mughal court at the beginning of the eighteenth century, did not justify the violent repression against the Hindus in terms of Islam and its scriptures. Instead, he designed the mosque settings to be as separate as possible from the legitimisation of rule and the planning of wars and politics.

The peaceful settings serve Musta'idd Ḥān to describe the ideal social state which the new ruler and intended recipient Bahādur Šāh Alam ultimately had to reach and, if necessary, defend. The Ellora setting and the coronation of Aurangzīb serve as good examples, as Musta'idd Ḥān deliberately worked here with symbols to reach non-Muslim recipients: in this case, Hindus and Šī'ites. A core aspect of the text thus becomes clear: its design as an *Agenda 1710*, which included indirect suggestions to the new ruler about how to govern his empire. Moreover, the peaceful settings served Musta'idd Ḥān to underpin the permanent state of emergency, which constantly interrupts the ideal state of the empire throughout the entire narrative. In this way, Aurangzīb's actions, which were already criticised in his lifetime, appear from the victim's perspective and are significantly relativised by the author. The actual troublemakers and aggressors are to be found outside the empire: the centre's penalties are ultimately to be regarded as a response to their prior and illegitimate aggression against the Mughals' peaceful settings.



## CHAPTER 3: THE ANALYSIS OF THE PROTAGONIST

*He said: Therein you will live, and therein you will die, and from it you will be brought forth?* - al-Qur'ān, 7:25.<sup>498</sup>

*The Emperor cried: God, oh God! And struck his hands on the knees. (...) I have razed to the ground the work of forty years.* - Musta'idd Ḥān writes about the protagonist's desperation.<sup>499</sup>

*Inayetullah Ḥān and myself were distracted and depressed in mind and body.* - Musta'idd Ḥān writes about his and his patron's mood.<sup>500</sup>

### PRELUDE I

A story always includes characters<sup>501</sup> who act or on whom an action is performed. Such characters are not necessarily people: animals, mythical creatures, personalised items, or other entities (God, angels, Satan, a *ǧinn*) can occur in a story as characters.<sup>502</sup> These characters should not necessarily be understood as individuals, since they may also take a collective form as a character group.<sup>503</sup>

Although there is no story without characters, narrative theory has for a long time assigned them only a minor role: more often, such analysis deals with the *characterisation* of characters.<sup>504</sup> Even the standard theory by Martínez and Scheffel lacks a component for character analysis.<sup>505</sup> The reasons for this are related to the structuralist theory of narrative, which focuses on the way in which the plot generates a narrative. This means that the characters are not separate objects of investigation, since they are analysed in terms of their role within the plot. However, in the exegetical variant of narrative criticism, character analysis has been a standard part of its methodological repertoire from the beginning,<sup>506</sup> and it now seems that the classic dispute over whether story or character is more important for the

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<sup>498</sup> *‘qāla fihā tahyawna wa fihā tamūtūna wa min’hā tukh’rajūna’*, Q 7:25. I refer to Hartmut Bobzin's latest translation of the *Qur'ān*, see idem, *Der Koran. Aus dem Arabischen neu übertragen*, Munich, 2010.

<sup>499</sup> *Ma'āsiri-ī 'Ālamgīrī*, 249, I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 179.

<sup>500</sup> *Ibd.*

<sup>501</sup> The English word 'character' presents some difficulties when it comes to translation. In French, it can be rendered as *personage*, while *Figur* is preferred to *Charackter* in German.

<sup>502</sup> Finnnern presents a detailed definition of a figure, see Finnnern, *Narratologie*, 125, footnote 423.

<sup>503</sup> Pfister, *Drama*, 225.

<sup>504</sup> See Hans-Werner Ludwig, 'Figur und Handlung' in Hans-Werner Ludwig (ed.), *Arbeitsbuch Romananalyse*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., Tübingen, 1998, 106-144.

<sup>505</sup> Matias Martinez/Michael Scheffel, *Einführung in die Erzähltheorie*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., Munich, 2008.

<sup>506</sup> Here, the key figure was Chatman because of his appeal to start independently analysing narrative figures. See Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 107-138, especially 111-119; this was then taken up in the important contribution of Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*. Philadelphia, 1988 (2nd edition). See Finnnern, *Narratologie*, 126, footnote 426.

plot has been largely resolved. Thus, characters have increasingly become the subjects of literary narratological analysis.<sup>507</sup>

The understanding of character seems to be in a similarly barren position. Here, the ‘mimetic’ or realistic concept of character is opposed by the semiotic, structuralist view. Structuralist narratology has often argued against a realistic understanding of character that treats the characters in a story like real people; instead, this kind of narratology has speculated on characters’ unsaid properties, feelings, and behaviours because the proponents of this view hold that characters are nothing more than textual structures.<sup>508</sup>

However, various publications have indicated a solution. A middle ground has been proposed, which suggests characters are not on the same level as historical reality (the complaint against the realist understanding of character), but neither are they mere text-based constructions (the structuralist understanding of character); rather, they are real in terms of the ‘narrated world’.<sup>509</sup> This third variant can be interpreted in terms of the cognitive turn: the narrated world exists in the mind of the recipients and so the characters should be considered as part of the narrated world as so-called ‘mental models’. To substantiate the ‘*mental model*’ of a character, the reader adds character information in the text to his or her ‘knowledge of the world’ in general and to the specific world of the narrative. The result of this cognitive process is called a ‘synthesis character’.<sup>510</sup> It seems fair to assume that an author of such a process of inference is intuitively aware of it.<sup>511</sup>

A real reader or recipient does not stop at the surface structures of the text, but rather develops his or her thoughts about the characters and their motivations. Therefore, readers will often not only perceive a character as he or she is explicitly described in the text,<sup>512</sup> but will also hypothesise additional character traits which are not explicitly mentioned.<sup>513</sup> Therefore, if we seek to understand how a narrative function, it is necessary to consider the emotions, motives, or character traits that an intended recipient may extrapolate on account of their own

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<sup>507</sup> See Fotis Jannidis, *Figur und Person. Beitrag zu einer historischen Narratologie*, Berlin, 2004 and especially Eder, *Figur im Film*.

<sup>508</sup> Pfister, *Drama*, 221; Eisen, *Die Poetik der Apostelgeschichte*, 132f.

<sup>509</sup> For the following argumentation in detail, see: Finnnern, *Narratologie*, 126f., especially footnote 429 and 430.

<sup>510</sup> Eder, *Figur im Film*, 165.

<sup>511</sup> Ralf Schneider, *Grundriss zur kognitiven Theorie der Figurenrezeption am Beispiel des viktorianischen Romans*, Tübingen, 2000, 154; Jannidis, *Figur*, 184.

<sup>512</sup> Finnnern, *Narratologie*, 128.

<sup>513</sup> This is, of course, a tricky issue for the present text (or the Bible): it is clear that our ‘world knowledge’ differs greatly from that of the intended recipients of the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, see, e.g., Jannidis, *Figur*, 184.

perceptual disposition. Through doing so, the analysis may gain considerable insights that might not be obtained with a conventional structuralist concept.

The mental world of the recipient is formed in a similar way to how people construct their perceptions of everyday life. Character traits, therefore, consist of the explicit and implicit appreciation of the specific recipient. In his pioneering study, Jens Eder argues that:

A major attraction of the film-vision [and also of the reception of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, TK] is to develop the personality of the characters and understand their inner life. We connect with the exterior features of the fictitious characters a certain character and we lead her behaviour back to mental motivations. We also try to understand their world view and grapple with their *emotions, motives, internal conflicts, border situations, identity crises or mental abnormalities*.<sup>514</sup>

When discussing the identity, traits, or opinions of a character, it is important to emphasise that the intercultural and the temporal are the general categories of description, but not the content; in this, the narratological analysis of character shares much with other areas of narratological exegesis. We can thus ask how the recipient might explain the characters' 'behaviour' (a category of analysis), but we cannot assume that the intended recipient of, for example, a biblical text or a Mughal chronicle has subconsciously applied a psychoanalytic interpretation.<sup>515</sup> Additionally, the recipients have several opportunities to close the behaviour of a character to their feelings or characteristics,<sup>516</sup> and too often we lack the necessary information of the historical context to determine exactly what dispositions (world knowledge, etc.) an author presupposed in a text's recipients. Nevertheless, in many cases, the way in which the recipient constructs a character model can be at least rudimentarily portrayed.

This chapter differs from the previous one in terms of its structure. Here, the sections are not separated into prelude and analysis; rather, the analysis occurs alongside the discussion of the source material. This is because the source extracts are much shorter than those which detailed the settings, and they are also scattered throughout the text. In some places, I will refer again to the key messages of the previous chapter. The points of analysis not mentioned in the substantive analysis of each character will be discussed in the final analysis. For example, this is the case for those points which consider the characters as a collective.

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<sup>514</sup> Eder, *Film*, 281.

<sup>515</sup> In detail, *ibid.*, 282-284 and 246 f., see Finnern, *Narratologie*, 131.

<sup>516</sup> *Idem*, 179.



## PRELUDE II

### ON SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY MELANCHOLIA

In the first half of the seventeenth century, many leading intellectuals and artists suffered from *melancholia*, which was mainly caused by the consequences of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). This artistic melancholia manifested itself in a belief in the still life and in the depiction of *vanitas*, which was one of the most popular genres of painting at this time. It was fashionable to dress in black and be portrayed in murky water landscapes, all while reciting poems such as those by Andreas Gryphius (1616-1664). Gryphius summarised the dominant melancholy mood in works like his *Kirchhofsgedanken* (*Cemetery Thoughts*, 1656).<sup>517</sup>

It was at this time that the English priest and scholar Robert Burton (died 1640) published his *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). This work brought together nearly 2,000 years of scholarship, from ancient Greek philosophy to medical tracts by the outstanding physicians of the seventeenth century. Melancholy, a condition which was held to be caused by an imbalance of the body's four humors, was characterised by despondency, depression, and inactivity. Burton himself suffered from it and thus decided to compile an authoritative scientific work on the disease on the basis of all relevant sources. Burton's study was a huge success; in just a short time, six new editions were printed. *The Anatomy of Melancholy* offers a fascinating insight into the medical theory of the seventeenth century and influenced many generations of playwrights and poets.<sup>518</sup>

This period in European intellectual history is of utmost importance. The classic argument holds that this unique melancholic mood caused many European scholars to enter into an intense preoccupation with the self, which in turn resulted in a decisive step towards the emergence of the individual and modern western societies. As Jessica Riskin has just recently argued, feelings of fear and powerlessness were major motivators for the intensive future

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<sup>517</sup> See Lawrence Babb, *Elizabethan Malady. A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642*, East Lansing, 1951; Antje Wittstock's work on the Florentine philosopher, doctor, and scholar Marsilio Ficino, *Melancholia translata. Marsilio Ficinos Melancholie-Begriff im deutschsprachigen Raum des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Göttingen, 2011; Peter Sillem, *Saturns Spuren. Aspekte des Wechselspiels von Melancholie und Volkskultur in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Frankfurt/Main, 2001.

<sup>518</sup> This brief section is based on Melvyn Bragg's discussion with Julie Sanders, Mary Ann Lund, and Erin Sullivan. See 'The Anatomy of Melancholy' on <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b010y30m>, last accessed 15/12/2012, and Mary Ann Lund's study, *Melancholy, Medicine and Religion in Early Modern England. Reading The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Cambridge, 2010. I am also very thankful for the suggestions and debates with Jonas Gerlings and Jenny Hillman. See also Angus Gowland, *The Worlds of Renaissance Melancholy. Robert Burton in Context*, Cambridge, 2006; Mary Ann Lund, *Melancholy, Medicine and Religion in Early Modern England. Reading The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Cambridge, 2010.

phase of the Enlightenment.<sup>519</sup> According to the hotly debated studies of Tony Huff, it was the mixture of these exclusively early modern European emotions with a unique curiosity and specific social structures that caused a scientific revolution which occurred nowhere else in the world:

Speaking of the general impact of higher education in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the late British-American historian Lawrence Stone hit the right note when he observed ‘what is so striking about this period is not the appearance of individual men of genius who may bloom in the most unpromising soil, but rather the widespread public participation in significant intellectual debate on every front’.<sup>520</sup>

Huff is far from alone in holding to this classic argument: modern historiographical research still seems to associate these specific early modern emotions solely with a (mostly male and Western) European milieu and thereby posits the cultural and collective reasons for the subsequent dominance of some European societies over much of the world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Consequently, Max Weber’s argument is not at all passé and indeed has experienced a strong renaissance, not only in bestsellers like those by Niall Ferguson, who has labelled the Protestant work ethic as the West’s major ‘killer app’,<sup>521</sup> but also in works by distinguished scholars, such as Huff,<sup>522</sup> Francés Ferguson,<sup>523</sup> or Heinrich-August Winkler.<sup>524</sup>

The reason why these arguments remain so persistent perhaps lies in the fact that more recent methodological approaches within smaller fields of research (like Islamic studies for example)<sup>525</sup> are still in their early stages. However, some important studies have questioned these arguments, particularly in terms of the history of sexuality. Joseph Massad,<sup>526</sup> Khaled El-Rouayheb,<sup>527</sup> and Shereen El Feki<sup>528</sup> argue that the history of sexuality cannot be analysed in isolation from the study of emotions. They convincingly show that pre-modern Islamic

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<sup>519</sup> Jessica Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility. The Sentimental Empiricists of the French Enlightenment*, Chicago, 2002.

<sup>520</sup> Toby Huff, *Intellectual Curiosity and the Scientific Revolution. A Global Perspective*, New York, 303.

<sup>521</sup> See in detail chapter six (Work) of Niall Ferguson, *The West and the Rest*, London, 2011, 256-291.

<sup>522</sup> Toby Huff and Wolfgang Schluchter (eds.), *Max Weber & Islam*, New Brunswick, 1999; idem, *An Age of Science and Revolutions, 1600-1800*, Oxford, 2005 and - most recently - Idem, *Scientific Curiosity*.

<sup>523</sup> Ferguson basically argues that envy is a phenomenon solely in democratic western societies over the last 200 years. Ferguson argues that the lack of a caste or feudal system, and the concomitant fixed social positions, left the European citizen free to envy someone else’s social position, achievements, etc. see Francés Ferguson, ‘Envy Rising. The Progress of an Emotion’, in James Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin (eds.), *Romantic Metropolis. The Urban Scene of British Culture, 1780-1840*, Cambridge, 2005, 132-148.

<sup>524</sup> Heinrich August Winkler, *Geschichte des Westens. Von den Anfängen in der Antike bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, Munich, 2009.

<sup>525</sup> See Conermann, *Was ist Kulturwissenschaft*.

<sup>526</sup> Joseph Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, Chicago, 2007.

<sup>527</sup> Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800*, Chicago, 2009.

<sup>528</sup> Shereen El-Feki, *Sex and the Citadel. Intimate Life in a Changing Arab World*, New York, 2013.

societies cannot be seen as the static and passive opposites of their European neighbours, where the process of individualisation took place in isolation from the rest of the world. This is because, naturally, the individual in Islamic societies was also devoted to his or her own sexuality and fell into melancholic thoughts.<sup>529</sup>

The present chapter is therefore a contribution to this debate, since it aims to examine which specific emotions Musta‘idd Hān assigned to one of the most powerful early modern rulers and which he did not. At this point, no direct comparison to Robert Burton’s work on melancholia will be drawn. This short prelude is intended to serve as an introduction to the debate and should provide the justification for how an analysis of the history of emotions can deliver insights into common historiographical trends. It is in need of such justification because this specific approach can be correctly criticised as a very vague concept underlying what is ultimately a completely individual interpretation. Therefore, I will not try to answer the question of how Aurangzīb really felt or thought, since it is impossible to answer it.<sup>530</sup>

Instead, the chapter is interested in the following questions; which emotions did Musta‘idd Hān use to portray his former patron, and why did he choose them? Are we simply dealing with a destructive and austere ruler who prohibited all art and beauty at court? If so, how did the author judge this in his own text? Or is it more likely that Musta‘idd Hān, who worked on the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* whilst also serving Aurangzīb’s son Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur, a ruler who

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<sup>529</sup> However, the main difference is that, if we follow Tony Huff’s argumentation, these few Muslim individuals were not only exceptions (in sharp contrast to many European intellectuals), but also did not find the necessary local and social structures where they could use their individual talents productively (again, in sharp contrast to Europe). Thus, as so many have done before him, Huff also uses the classic narrative about Aurangzeb to construct a dualism between a passive and isolated pre-modern Indian society and its disinterested Muslim authorities on the one hand, and the active, expanding, individualised, and scientific Europeans on the other. He does this without even beginning to address at least some of the latest results of current Mughal historiography, to which he would have had access before his study was published (namely Brown, *Did Aurangzeb Ban Music*; Bhatia, *The Ulama, Islamic Ethics and Courts under the Mughals*; Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam*). Huff’s summary of Aurangzeb’s rule looks like this: ‘With the ascension of Sultan Aurangzeb to the Mughal throne in 1666 [sic: Aurangzeb ascended to the throne in 1658] the concern for modern scientific developments faded even more into the background. His rulership became known for his vigorous imposition of Islamic law. Some historians suggested that he paid lip service to advancing modernized education, but no evidence has been brought forth indicating that such a reform was achieved. One can find individual scholars here and there who appreciated and avidly sought out the latest developments in Western science and philosophy brought to India by European travellers (...) We cannot stress too much, however, the fact that science is a social activity embedded in a larger social context and that an isolated individual here and there is not enough to support the activity of science that leads to scientific progress’. Huff’s study, published by the highly reputed Cambridge University Press, serves as yet another good example of how this period in early modern Indian history is largely treated negligently. See Huff, *Intellectual Curiosity and the Scientific Revolution*, 125.

<sup>530</sup> As we have known in European literature since Proust and Joyce, we cannot express all the emotions we experience in a second, much less a day, adequately in our writing. See e.g., Judith Kasper, *Sprachen des Vergessens. Proust, Perec und Barthes zwischen Verlust und Eingedenken*, Munich 2003; also Anz, *Emotional Turn*.

strongly differed from his father, designed a much more complex picture of the former Mughal ruler?

Bearing this in mind, I want to show in the present chapter that individualised existential crises were not limited to early modern Europe: we can find similar trends and performed<sup>531</sup> emotions in the cultural environment of Mughal India as well, a fact demonstrated throughout the entirety of the *Ma'asere 'Alamgiri*.

These performed emotions played a crucial role in the political theatre of early modern times. Thus we have to ask ourselves the question: which of these dominant emotions are manifested within our text? In his article on the Mughal succession crisis, Jorge Flores argues that:

(...) jealousy, desire, loyalty, betrayal, love, and hate (...) would most likely be classified as belonging to the private domain. But in the past, and in very distinct socio-political realities - from the crucial role played by love in the political vocabulary of the Portuguese *ancien régime* (...), to the importance of filial piety to the exercise of power in China (...) - these emotions acquired a tangible public projection.<sup>532</sup>

Again, we do not apply the same concept of melancholy as Robert Burton does in *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Burton's text, although important, is not the measure of all texts. Therefore, I have decided not to talk about the protagonist's melancholy, but rather about Aurangzīb's *withdrawal from the world*.<sup>533</sup>

We have talked about how the Thirty Years War and its consequences caused many European scholars, artists, and intellectuals to fall into a crisis of faith and meaning. The following section will thus engage briefly with the political, religious, and cultural reasons that motivated our author to portray Aurangzīb as an overwhelmed and even helpless king who was constantly isolated from his environment and thus clearly differentiated from his predecessors, rather than a true conqueror of the world (*Alam-gir*), as the title of his chronicle suggests.

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<sup>531</sup> See Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Kingdom, Household and Body. History, Gender and Imperial Service under Akbar' in *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 41, no. 5, 2007, 889 - 923; idem, 'Narratives of Penance and Purification in Western India, c. 1650-1850' in *Journal of Hindu Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2009, 48-75.

<sup>532</sup> Jorge Flores, 'I Will Do as My Father Did. On Portuguese and Other European Views of Mughal Succession Crises' in *e-JPH*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2005, 1-23, 2.

<sup>533</sup> Fortunately, there are two very helpful articles on Islamic literature and melancholy. See Ian Almond, 'Islam, Melancholy, and Sad, Concrete Minarets. The Futility of Narratives in Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book*' in *New Literary History*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2003, 75-90; idem, 'Post-Colonial Melancholy. An Examination of Sadness in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*' in *Orbis Litterarum*, vol. 59, no. 2, 2004, 90-99.

## ON THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY'S CRISIS OF CONSCIENCE

In his global history of Sufism, Nile Green characterises the first century following the first Muslim millennium (1591) as a period of *crisis of conscience*.<sup>534</sup> this is precisely the period in which Aurangzīb Alamgir and the author of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* grew up, worked, and lived (1618-1707).

Within the current historiographical scholarship, the seventeenth century is generally defined as a period of deep crisis in which Islamic countries experienced considerable social upheavals.<sup>535</sup> The population increased enormously, which in turn changed the demographic balance between different social groups and caused growing urbanisation. The period was also characterised by a marked intensification of global trade and huge capital accumulation in new social groups, with a simultaneous increase in contacts with members of other religions and cultures. Natural and human-induced changes caused new patterns of migration and settlement. A new round of military confrontations between pagans and Christians started, leading to the creation of new imperial states with novel bureaucratic agendas and religious leaders.<sup>536</sup>

All of this left a distinct mark on developments in religious and intellectual history, influencing many prominent intellectuals and leading *sufis*. What makes the mid-seventeenth century so important is precisely this collective broad awareness that a new era had dawned: both Christians and Muslims alike were aware of this process and its impact on their societies.<sup>537</sup> Interestingly, this was not something new in regard to the emotional interlacing of early modern Eurasia. Nearly 100 years before, in around 1580, we can already witness another shared feeling that connected both European Christians and Asian Muslims. In his classic article on *connected history*, Sanjay Subrahmanyam has argued convincingly that this period was mainly characterised by a cross-cultural fear of the millennium that connected the economic and cultural spaces of the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.<sup>538</sup> There are clear parallels to our case a century later, when the seventeenth-century crisis of conscience resulted in a global feeling of despair among many leading Christian and Muslim intellectuals

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<sup>534</sup> See in detail Green, *Sufism*, 129, 154-160, 164.

<sup>535</sup> Niels Steensgaard, 'The Seventeenth-Century Crisis and the Unity of Eurasian History' in *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 24, no. 4, 1990, 683 - 697; Richards, *The Seventeenth-Century Crisis in South Asia*; Geoffrey Parker was very helpful, see idem, *Global Crisis. War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century*, New Haven, 2013, 399-421 (chpt. 13: The Mughals and their Neighbours).

<sup>536</sup> Green, *Sufism*, 128.

<sup>537</sup> Ibid., 129; see also Stephen Blake, *Time in Early Modern Islam. Calendar, Ceremony and Chronology in the Safavid, Mughal, and Ottoman Empires*, Cambridge, 2013.

<sup>538</sup> Subrahmanyam, *Connected Histories*, 735-762.

and scholars. As will be shown in the coming chapter, this was the case with Musta‘idd Hān too. The latter provides a perfect example of an anxious Muslim writer in this crisis-ridden century, whose anxiety manifested itself in his portrayal of an often-desperate king who increasingly retreated into loneliness and avoided all festivities and joyous moments at the court.

In regards to this, Green argues that we additionally witness in the seventeenth century an intense preoccupation with the self and a combined search for the new (*tajdid*) in numerous Muslim milieus.<sup>539</sup> Of course, this crisis of conscience did not occur everywhere at the same time; it depended on various regional factors, social change, and individual action.

In most cases, the crisis of conscience that accompanied the manifold social changes of the early modern era was not explicitly voiced in millennial terms but in the multiple calls for self-reflection or renewal that were heard from South-East Asia to West-Africa.<sup>540</sup>

With this brief prelude, it should be clear that the argument that emotions like melancholy or envy and the related process of individualisation occurred only in early modern Europe should be questioned. As we shall now see, there were deep structural causes within Islamic cultures that plunged people into a crisis of meaning, leaving them in despair over prevailing conditions. Rajev Kinra summarises the neglected analysis of emotions of the pre-modern individual in current Mughal research in succinct terms:

The Mughal Empire is often depicted in such fabulous terms that one might easily forget that there were actual people who lived there, forming friendships, working bureaucratic jobs, mourning lost loved ones, drinking too much, having existential crises and so on.<sup>541</sup>

Fortunately, this negligence has changed in recent years thanks to the important studies of historians like Muzaffar Alam, Kumkum Chatterjee, Stephan Conermann, Jos Gommans, Munis Faruqi, Jorge Flores, Rosalind O’Hanlon, Rajeev Kinra, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, and Audrey Truschke. Mughal historiography has been lifted up to a new level. Now, in addition to the major approaches like social, political, or global history, growing attention is being paid to analysing the text’s performance, its narrative strategies, and the historical and cultural interpretation of wonder and emotions.<sup>542</sup>

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<sup>539</sup> Green, *Sufism*, 157.

<sup>540</sup> Idem, 129.

<sup>541</sup> Kinra, *Master and Munshī*, 529.

<sup>542</sup> In this context, Nile Green’s global historical account of the Sufis, in which he defines the seventeenth century as an era of a crisis of conscience, is particularly fruitful when used in combination with the recently

In the following chapter, we will deal with how Musta‘idd Ḥān used certain specific emotions to portray his protagonist Aurangzīb Alamgir and the numerous contingent events that Aurangzīb and his entourage had to suffer through in these years of crisis. Again, even though we are not dealing with the European concept of *melancholia*, we can still nevertheless recognise that Musta‘idd Ḥān presents his protagonist as a true child of this crisis-ridden period: increasingly overburdened, exposed to many threats, and isolated within his own family, Aurangzīb’s only solution was to withdraw from the court’s daily festivities.

I will begin my analysis by taking a detailed look at the protagonist’s textual emotions in the first ten years of his reign (1658-1668, pp. 1-66). This is followed by a comparison with the second, much larger, part of the text (1669-1707, pp. 67-533). This comparison will show that these two sections differ sharply from one another. In the first ten years, the author portrays Aurangzīb as an isolated king who faces innumerable obstacles. Then, from the eleventh year onwards, Musta‘idd Ḥān begins to anthropomorphise the protagonist<sup>543</sup> and his withdrawal from the world to the greatest extent possible.

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published studies of Michael Laffan and Max Weiss, in which the authors analyse early modern fears in more global terms, see idem, *Facing Fear. The History of an Emotion in Global Perspective*, Princeton, 2012.

<sup>543</sup> Wolf Schmid, *Narratology. An Introduction*, Berlin, 2010, 60-61; Bal, *Narratology*, 114f.; Luc Herman, *Handbook of Narrative Analysis*, Lincoln, 2010, 135 f.

## SECTION 1: ON AURANGZĪB'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WORLD AND HIS MISERY: THE ISOLATED KING IN THE FIRST PART OF THE TEXT

From the beginning, Aurangzīb is the lonely and tragic hero of the *Ma'āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*, isolated as he is from his brothers and his father. He cannot even rely on his own sons and loyal generals. Betrayal lurks around every corner and the emperor is always on the move in order to suppress the never-ending plots against him. Musta'idd Hān explicitly highlights that there were few kings who had had such a hard time as his former patron: 'It is well known that few kings had to fight so many battles and royal lordly encounters in such a period, as this Emperor had to do with powerful enemies in a single year.'<sup>544</sup> From the outset, his protagonist faces a variety of enemies: Murād Baḥš from Gujarat, the fourth son of Šāh Ġāhān, Šāh Ġūḡā', in Bengal, and Dārā, the favourite of the former emperor Šāh Ġāhān.<sup>545</sup>

Dārā in particular knows how to pull Aurangzīb's father Šāh Ġāhān to his side with trickery and magic, and thus successfully isolates Aurangzīb. Nevertheless, the latter repeatedly tries to contact his father,<sup>546</sup> even though he does not have a chance of success: 'through Dārā Shukoh's magic arts the Emperor's mind was somewhat estranged from Aurangzīb.'<sup>547</sup> On his march into battle, the emperor directed a caring letter to his ill father that he still had to visit him as part of his filial duty; however, he is rejected and forced to realise that he will not receive support from his parent. Alarming news continued to reach him and his isolation is perpetuated throughout the coming pages.

As it was probable that Jaswant Singh and Qasim Hān would fight, Aurangzīb prudently collected the means of war (...), started from Aurangabad towards Burhanpur (and) (...) sent a letter to Šāh Ġāhān (begging permission) to visit him in his illness. No reply came in one month, but alarming news continued to arrive.<sup>548</sup>

After he pardons his brother Murād Baḥš for his previous incorrect behaviour, Baḥš betrays his gracious brother yet again.<sup>549</sup> Putting his own brother into prison,<sup>550</sup> Aurangzīb is forced to accept the fact that his entire family has left him, despite his personal care for his dying father

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<sup>544</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*, 20; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āṣiri Ālamgiri*, 20.

<sup>545</sup> Most Recently, see Faruqui, *Mughal Princess*, 235-274 (=Chapter 6: Wars of Succession).

<sup>546</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*, 4.

<sup>547</sup> Idem, 5.

<sup>548</sup> Idem, 4.

<sup>549</sup> Idem, 8.

<sup>550</sup> Ibid.



and his willingness to forgive his brother's crimes. However, Aurangzīb is not only isolated from his family: the opposition of Hindus becomes a danger for the young prince once the war of succession breaks out. The experienced military leaders Rājā Jai Singh and Jaswant Singh, the latter of whom was also related to Šāh Ġāhān's mother, led a mass of the Hindus into the field of battle against the isolated Aurangzīb: 'the Hindus were many in numbers (...)'.<sup>551</sup>

The only help Aurangzīb can expect at the beginning of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* is from God: He intervenes in the decisive Battle of Samurgah in May 1658 against Dārā and secures for his faithful adherent a victory. Aurangzīb also relies on divine support in the battle against Dārā at Deorai in March 1659. When he heard of Dārā's escape, he immediately knew whom he had to thank for his victories, as it was 'through God's grace he achieved victory everywhere (and) so great was his humility that he never ascribed these victories to his own powers, but always spoke of them as miracles wrought by God'.<sup>552</sup> However, despite having such a strong ally, Aurangzīb's situation remained desperate: he was betrayed again, this time by the 'vicious' Maharaja Jaswant Singh,<sup>553</sup> to whom he had just given the command of his army's right wing. Many interpreted this betrayal as a disaster, but not the protagonist, who trusted in his faith and thanked God once more when the crisis was resolved in his favour.

Thus, Musta'idd Ḥān successfully drives his protagonist into a corner from the very beginning of the narrative. This complete isolation truly defines the first part of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*. At this point, let us remind ourselves again that Musta'idd Ḥān primarily referred to the famous *'Ālamgīr-nāma* to write this section, a text where Aurangzīb himself acted as a censor and therefore was part of its multiple authorship. Taking this into account, we begin to understand that this image of a lonely and isolated ruler who ultimately prevailed against all his enemies with the sole assistance of God was the image that Aurangzīb wanted enshrined for his descendants. The theme of the isolated king remains a crucial characteristic of Aurangzīb in the second part, but, as will be shown in later in this chapter, Musta'idd Ḥān developed this aspect still further. Free from the template of the *'Ālamgīr-nāma*, our author added characterisations which all contributed significantly to increasing sympathy for Aurangzīb's decisions. In the forthcoming analysis, I will show that Musta'idd Ḥān used this freedom deliberately and consistently. From the image of the eternally isolated but ever invincible protagonist, less and less remains as we approach the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*'s end.

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<sup>551</sup> Idem, 5.

<sup>552</sup> Idem, 20.

<sup>553</sup> Idem, 34.

## THE ISOLATED KING IN THE SECOND PART OF THE TEXT

The aforementioned father-son conflict is a theme that continues within the text's second half. Here, our author repeatedly stresses how much the protagonist honoured his father by having Aurangzīb extend filial care to his parent.<sup>554</sup> Musta'idd Hān clearly idealises this relationship by describing Aurangzīb as a misunderstood victim of this poisonous bond, and adds a further crucial anecdote in which we see how important this specific topic must have been for the author. It becomes obvious that the theme of father-son relations is the first component of the depiction of Aurangzīb's withdrawal from the world, which begins in chapter 11 (precisely the point at which Musta'idd Hān first gained some sort of freedom in regards to the design of the protagonist). Indeed, it is striking that a father-son conflict characterises the upcoming anecdote. However, Aurangzīb's father is no longer responsible for the conflict, as was the case previously: it is now Aurangzīb's son, Prince Muḥammad A'zam (1653-1707), who turns away from his father because of the latter's addiction to a luxurious lifestyle.

I argue that Musta'idd Hān uses this specific conflict in order to create, step by step, a dualism between the austere and pious Aurangzīb and the wasteful and rebellious Prince Muḥammad. What makes this design even more interesting is the fact that these two characters were both initially described as comrades: A'zam is depicted as Aurangzīb's favourite son, and was praised by the latter on several occasions.

He was the favourite son of his father (...) Khaḥi Hān says that A'A'zam considered himself heir-apparent to the throne. He was very jealous of his brothers, especially of Muazzam (= the later Šāh Bahādur).<sup>555</sup>

Musta'idd Hān, too, has to admit that this was an amicable relationship. However, he does so only at the end of his text, a placement which is striking:

Throuh the excellent training of His Majesty, A'zam reached the peak of perfection and gained (...) excellent qualities. The Emperor was very happy with the Prince's noble character and excellent manners.<sup>556</sup>

However, in terms of the eleventh chapter, the author depicts A'zam as the diametric opposite of Aurangzīb in order to enhance the effect of the latter's incipient isolation within his family. In this chapter, Musta'idd Hān writes: 'The festivities began (...) and the Emperor sat in the

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<sup>554</sup> Idem, 203.

<sup>555</sup> Jamshid Bilimoria (trans.), *Ruka'at-i-Ālamgīri or Letters of Aurungzeb*, London, 1908.11.

<sup>556</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āzīr-i-Ālamgīrī*, 536.

Court of Private Audience (...) In the night, the Prince came with pomp and showed it to the Emperor. (But) He went to the mosque.<sup>557</sup>

Musta‘idd Hān could not have presented the protagonist’s (alleged) aversion to the appearance of his son during this great festival more clearly. While Muḥammad A‘zam, festively dressed as a fresh groom, approaches his father with ‘pomp’, there is no joy at all on Aurangzīb’s side; indeed, the emperor decides to leave the wedding to visit the nearby mosque. Aurangzīb avoids the festivities and prefers the prayers and silence of the mosque. When the two characters meet again a few days later, Musta‘idd Hān explicitly strengthens the contrast between the two men.

The Emperor visited the Prince at his house. All the ground from the fort to the harem of the Prince was covered with cloth of gold, silver and plain cloth. The Emperor sat on a throne of gold (...) At the time of the Emperor’s arrival, the Prince has advanced to receive him outside the door of the band-room [...] The emperor ordered that men should not use in their garments cloth of gold, as the wearing of it was opposed to the holy law.<sup>558</sup>

The conflict’s trigger can be seen in Aurangzīb’s decision to leave the marriage and to go the mosque: now it is A‘zam’s turn to instigate familial strife. The reception of the ruler in the prince’s house is a power game and an opulent demonstration of his own resources. That the prince owns a golden throne in his palace must be viewed as a symbol of the intended succession; furthermore, the fact that the prince has decorated the palace entirely in gold must be regarded as a calculated affront to his austere father.

There are other indications of this. A few months before, Aurangzīb had, allegedly, banned music at his court.<sup>559</sup> That Muḥammad A‘zam receives him outside the door of the band room must therefore be seen as another provocation against his father. It indicates both that Muḥammad A‘zam apparently did not adhere to his father’s prohibition and that he received his father outside the band room, an act which must have had an effect if we consider the importance of etiquette at the Mughal court. Aurangzīb’s prompt answer could not be clearer. Only a few phrases after being confronted with all of A‘zam’s pomp and gold, he decides to ban dresses with golden decoration: ‘the Emperor ordered that men should not use in their garments cloth of gold, as the wearing of it was opposed to the Holy Law.’<sup>560</sup> With this trying family affair, Musta‘idd Hān initiates the protagonist’s withdrawal from the world, which

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<sup>557</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 78; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma‘āṣirī Ālamgiri*, 49.

<sup>558</sup> Idem, 79; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma‘āṣirī Ālamgiri*, 50.

<sup>559</sup> I will discuss this delicate topic in detail in chapter 5.

<sup>560</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 79.

here is symbolised by his decision to avoid public festivities and common joy, and instead seek quiet prayer in the mosque.

In the following section, we will devote ourselves to examining the very specific emotions of the protagonist and his environment, which were caused by never-ending conflicts and continuous isolation. As will be shown, these very dramatic and emotional quotes are an essential part of Musta‘idd Hān’s narrative strategy, which he used to establish a link between the protagonist and the text’s intended recipient.

### THE MISERY OF THE PROTAGONIST AND HIS ENTOURAGE

It is certainly no coincidence that Musta‘idd Hān placed this specific father-son conflict in the first chapter where he no longer had to rely on the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*. He switches Aurangzīb’s function: whereas before he was the betrayed son of his duplicitous father Šāh Ġāhān, now he is the father of a wastrel son. Indeed, the beginning of the eleventh chapter constitutes a crucial turning point of the narrative in general. From now onwards, the author adds repeated indications of the negative emotional state of the protagonist and his closest entourage at important junctures in the text. There is no evidence of this in the first part of the text, as Aurangzīb and his entourage are depicted here as inviolable and unwavering, and thus fully in the spirit of *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*.

This being said, it is conspicuous that all of the extracts which point out the protagonist’s misery and the depression of his family members and highest nobles are located in the last third of the text.<sup>561</sup> This is not only because Musta‘idd Hān no longer had to rely on the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*. It was also because he wanted to use such emotions to create the effect of ‘closure’, the great importance of which Sönke Finnern has indicated in his important narratological analysis of the Gospel of Matthew.<sup>562</sup> To put it simply, the closer we get to the end of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, the more important it was for Musta‘idd Hān to portray his protagonist to the text’s recipient as the narrative’s real victim. This was no doubt a difficult task for the author, considering Aurangzīb’s many controversial decisions and his decades-long zeal for action. By incorporating the protagonist’s emotions into the text’s conclusion, he depicts Aurangzīb’s governmental failures in the 50 years of his reign from the ruler’s perspective. Instead of rejecting and condemning his hero’s mistakes, Musta‘idd Hān created pity and sympathy for the protagonist. This strategy has two key points.

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<sup>561</sup> Good examples are, to name just a few, idem, 251, 281, 294, 304, 337-338, 348-349, 361-362, 462, 513, 520, 524, 525.

<sup>562</sup> Finnern, *Narratologie und biblische Exegese*, 120 f., 322 f., 120 f., 322 ff.

Firstly, he describes Aurangzīb and his closest advisors as frequently being desperate and depressed. In this way, Musta‘idd Ḥān sought to capture the era’s crisis of conscience: he not only focuses on the suffering of the protagonist, but also on the dejection of Aurangzīb’s entourage, which was made up of the highest nobles of his kingdom. These men he effectively describes as being completely deprived of hope at key moments in the text.

Secondly, Musta‘idd Ḥān begins the process of humanising the protagonist from the eleventh chapter onwards. He dismantles the pathos of distance, which was a vital narrative technique in first part of the text for maintaining distance between the infallible ruler and the other human characters. In order to humanise Aurangzīb in the second part of the text, Musta‘idd Ḥān emphasises the protagonist’s human traits and his direct and voluntary contact with other characters. Concomitantly, he also describes the protagonist’s fallibility and expresses both direct and indirect criticism of the ruler’s decisions. In this way, he tries to counter any antipathy towards the protagonist which might arise within the text’s recipient, depicting the former emperor as a human being who was allowed to make a mistake. This is a depiction which would have been unthinkable within the part of the text based on the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*.

Therefore, Aurangzīb no longer appears as an unshakeable, all-powerful, and flawless ruler who distanced himself from everything and everyone, but rather as a vulnerable, approachable, and aging human being. Musta‘idd Ḥān not only prepares the recipient for Aurangzīb’s inevitable death, the largest human contingency,<sup>563</sup> but also skilfully crafts a way in which the intended recipient can identify with Aurangzīb. We must recall the fact that Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur was already old when he finally gained power in 1707 and was overwhelmed with many new tasks. The humanisation of the protagonist thus fulfils a crucial function within Musta‘idd Ḥān’s narrative strategy, as it is closely associated with mortality, vulnerability, and despair. Through this, the aging son of Aurangzīb, who entered his office in one of the most serious crises of the Mughal Empire, might be able to identify with his suffering and frail father. He could only feel sympathy towards such a vulnerable protagonist and thus might be more inclined to forgive all those mistakes that he now had to pay for himself in his old age. Nothing would have caused a greater distance between the recipient and the protagonist than maintaining his protagonist as an infallible, strong, and ever-youthful ruler, as was the case within the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*. The much longer second half of the text therefore attempts a cautious fusion of Aurangzīb’s features with those of his son, Šāh ‘Ālam

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<sup>563</sup> See in detail Norbert Ricken, *Subjektivität und Kontingenz. Markierungen im pädagogischen Diskurs*, Würzburg, 1999, 249f.; Christian Flatz, *Kultur als neues Weltordnungsmodell oder die Kontingenz der Kulturen*, Hamburg, 1999, 110f.

Bahādur. As we see shall see, there was plenty for our chronicler to do. Here, we need to understand the protagonist's striking sadness, the despair of his closest entourage, and the surprising closeness of Aurangzīb to the other characters at the text's end.

In total, there are three main character groups which the author provided with direct emotions of grief and despair. First of all, we find bereaved nobles who mourn the deaths of relatives. With more than 300 representations of demise over 540 pages, death is omnipresent within the *Ma'āsiri-ī Ālamgīrī*. Death and all its consequences on characters is the text's dominant event: it fundamentally shapes the overall tone of the *Ma'āsiri-ī Ālamgīrī*. It undoubtedly provides the author the best way in which to create a wistful mood in his text and to ascribe negative emotions to the protagonist and his closest entourage. From the eleventh chapter onwards, passages such as 'the Emperor was very sorry to hear of his death of his servants',<sup>564</sup> '(...) the Emperor was so saddened and cried (...)',<sup>565</sup> '(...) the Emperor was grieving deeply (...)',<sup>566</sup> and '(...) the depressed Khidmat Hān'<sup>567</sup> are ubiquitous in the text.<sup>568</sup>

To underline the loss and to increase grief, the author often reports those good qualities of the deceased which he expects will be appreciated. Interestingly, it is mainly artistic and intellectual qualities that are praised, such as '(...) with him withered the rose in the garden of correct understanding and rapid writing.'<sup>569</sup> All of this helps to make those sections which present the noble characteristics of the dead and the protagonist's subsequent personal grief particularly impressive. The effect is further increased on those occasions when Musta'idd Hān inserted poems at the end of a chapter to underpin the high poeticism with which death and grief are described. Take the following example:

As he was the son of the Emperor's maternal aunt's son and was adorned with many noble qualities, his departure grieved His Majesty. God pardon him! One of the signs of his being most probably pardoned was the fact that the Emperor visited him in his last moments and prayed to God for pardon on his behalf. At the time of his death he recited the verse: With what pride is this servant leaving the world, that you have come to his (bed) head at the time of his giving up life!<sup>570</sup>

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<sup>564</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āsiri-ī Ālamgīrī*, 144.

<sup>565</sup> Idem, 462.

<sup>566</sup> Idem, 513.

<sup>567</sup> Idem, 304; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 185.

<sup>568</sup> As mentioned above, Musta'idd Hān wrote these direct and quite dramatic quotes on 251, 281, 294, 304, 337-338, 348-349, 361-362, 462, 513, 520, 524, 525.

<sup>569</sup> Idem, 282.

<sup>570</sup> Idem, 348-349, I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 210.

In addition to these frequent representations of death, the author lists many descriptions of a nobility stricken with grief and other woes: these emphasise the sorrowful tone of the text. These sad passages usually deal with deaths, diseases, natural disasters (especially flooding), or military defeats. Sometimes, the author indicates these emotions directly in order to clearly highlight that a noble character was depressed and that his soul was suffering: ‘with every caution and care so that even a fly might not trouble this soul-sick patient.’<sup>571</sup>

In some passages, one has to look a little more closely. However, even here it quickly becomes clear that Musta‘idd Hān designed the characters to manifest mourning and suffering. The inserted poems in particular underline this tone distinctively; unfortunately, these were generally erased in Sarkar’s translation.

Salabat Hān begged permission to go to Delhi on account of severe illness, but died after passing a few stages. At this time he used frequently to recite (verse): I have myself come and betaken myself to the corner of the sepulchre, That my bones may not burden anybody.<sup>572</sup>

Finally, another function of this sorrowful tone of the text is that it enables Musta‘idd Hān to enhance the protagonist’s function as a calm anchor. As much as the protagonist suffers from all of these contingent events, he often remains the only hope of the desperate and bereaved, and offers them consolation: ‘The Emperor soothed his wounded heart with consolatory words.’<sup>573</sup>

By considering that death is by far the most mentioned event within the text, we can also come to understand that another very important character group cannot escape the text’s negative mood. The author Musta‘idd Hān and his influential patron ‘Ināyat Allāh Hān share in the narrative’s mournful tone, as is explicitly stated in the text’s close: ‘Inayetullah Hān and myself were distracted and depressed in mind and body.’<sup>574</sup>

Given that the tendency towards withdrawal from the world affects all of the significant characters, it is hardly surprising that Musta‘idd Hān designed the last words of the protagonist to be so desperate and hopeless. Soberly, he lets Aurangzīb realise that all his actions and his efforts over the years were completely pointless: ‘The Emperor cried: God, oh God! And struck his hands on the knees (...) I have razed to the ground the work of forty years.’<sup>575</sup> Furthermore, the author cements his protagonist’s shocking realisation by having his

<sup>571</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma’āsiri-ī ‘Ālamgīrī*, 343.

<sup>572</sup> Idem, 349, I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma’āsiri ‘Ālamgiri*, 211.

<sup>573</sup> Idem, 461.

<sup>574</sup> Idem, 525.

<sup>575</sup> Idem, 24, I took this translation from, *Ma’āsiri ‘Ālamgiri*, 179.

last words to the world show only despair. Shortly before Aurangzīb breathed his last breath, the protagonist constantly repeats sobering thoughts to those nobles who accompanied him. These last words testify his belief in the transience of all his supposedly heroic deeds: ‘in a twinkle, in a minute, in a breath, the condition of the world changes.’<sup>576</sup>

Let us recall at this point the aforementioned discussion of the era’s crisis of conscience and Aurangzīb’s contemporary Andreas Gryphius, the star of the German melancholic baroque scene. In 1637, while Aurangzīb was busy with the conquest of the principality of Baglana, he completed his sonnet *All is Vanity*, which addresses the *vanitas* of all human activity, much like Aurangzīb does in his last words within the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*:

No matter where I look I see nothing but vanity on earth/What this person builds today, that person tears down tomorrow/Where towns stand so gloriously, tall and fine/There are shepherd will shortly roam with his herds.<sup>577</sup>

Both Gryphius and Aurangzīb rhapsodise that while one may accomplish much in life, in the end everything is vain and transitory.

At this point, another short comparison should be made to the writings of the Jesuit Monserrate who accompanied the Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1580 on his expedition to Afghanistan.<sup>578</sup> When Monserrate discussed with Akbar the inevitable dangers of the coming end of the world, he was astonished to realise that many Muslims had the same fears as his Christian coreligionists. On a similar basis, we might surmise Gryphius and Aurangzīb would have been good interlocutors if they had met. Certainly, we must be as careful with Monserrate’s report as we are with Musta‘idd Ḥān’s chronicle. Whether Akbar actually said what Monserrate reported or whether the words written by Musta‘idd Ḥān really were uttered by Aurangzīb ultimately plays no role within the present analysis. Rather, it is crucial that both authors tried to capture the general mood of their time in their texts by using the direct speech of their respective characters. These sentiments symbolised the specific anxieties of both authors’ *Sitz im Leben*. In the case of Monserrate, the fear of the millennium in 1580 united both the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, as Subrahmanyam has demonstrated.<sup>579</sup> The same is true for the melancholy of Aurangzīb and his contemporary Gryphius in the seventeenth century’s crisis of conscience. A detailed comparative analysis of these emotions in this period that takes into account specific structural conditions would certainly provide

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<sup>576</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 520; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma’āṣirī Ālamgiri*, 309.

<sup>577</sup> Lynne Tatlock, *Enduring Loss in Early Modern Germany. Cross Disciplinary Perspectives*, Leiden, 2010, 55.

<sup>578</sup> Subrahmanyam, *Connected Histories*, 748.

<sup>579</sup> *Ibid.*



more far-reaching results: unfortunately, this cannot be made at this point. Nevertheless, with this brief comparison of Monserrate, Musta‘idd Ḥān, and Andreas Gryphius, I wanted to show that our author and his protagonist were children of the seventeenth century’s crisis of conscience and could not escape the century’s dominant emotions.

In addition to the sadness of the protagonist’s declamations, the sorrowfulness of his immediate environment, and the mourning of the author and the text’s patron, Musta‘idd Ḥān initiated another narrative technique, namely the protagonist’s humanisation. He did this with two narrative techniques: firstly, through the protagonist’s direct speech and, secondly, by reducing his distance from the other characters. These two narrative techniques contribute substantially to creating sympathy for the protagonist.

## SECTION 2: THE PROTAGONIST'S LITERARY ANTHROPOMORPHISATION

### PRELUDE

I would like to begin the present section with a very special anecdote, which is representative of the narrative strategy in the second part of the *Ma'āsiri-i 'Ālamgīrī*. Both of the new narrative techniques mentioned above are used within this anecdote. After the presentation of the introductory narrative, I will analyse, in two separate parts, the two important narrative techniques to which Musta'idd Hān frequently recurses in the second half of the text. This anecdote is not only important in terms of the author's new narrative strategy, but also because we can recognise the new self-confidence of the author. I seek to demonstrate within the upcoming section that the author confidently puts himself within the narrative while simultaneously humanising the protagonist to emphasise his vulnerability and that he stands on the same level as the other characters.

The anecdote plays out in the seventeenth year of Aurangzīb's reign (1673-1674) in Hasan Abdal, a historic town in Northern Punjab. It takes nearly four pages to relate, which is remarkable given that the chapters are generally no longer than ten pages: this shows us that Musta'idd Hān clearly wanted to demonstrate something important with this narrative.<sup>580</sup> An old man complains that his mill does not get enough water: after Aurangzīb and his army arrived at the palace, water consumption increased enormously. Musta'idd Hān's self-confidence had reached a point where he was able to begin the section with the statement that it was 'the author's servants' who told him about the whole affair. He immediately reported it to his colleague Bakhtawar Hān, author of the *Mir'āt al- 'ālam*, who then shares the news with the emperor: he immediately ensures that the old man gets his water. Here, we witness the most detailed direct speech of the emperor so far, which initiates the process of literary anthropomorphisation. Aurangzīb tells Abdul Khair, son of the famous scholar Shaikh Nizam, to allow the old man to take food from the royal table:

Carry these to Bakhtawar Hān, he will guide you to the house of the old man, as he may possibly know it. Convey my salam to the poor man and beg his pardon, saying (on my behalf), 'You are my neighbour, and my arrival has caused you hardship. Pardon me'.<sup>581</sup>

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<sup>580</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āsiri-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 133-136.

<sup>581</sup> Idem, 134; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri 'Ālamgiri*, 83.

The abolition of the distance between Aurangzīb and his subjects could not be put more strongly: the emperor himself calls the poor old man his neighbour. In the anecdote, contact with Aurangzīb seems accesible to his courtiers and subjects, since he shares food with a farmer. In contrast, in the melon anecdote that demonstrated Musta‘idd Hān’s increased self-confidence, the royal court is far away from the chronicler: while the scenario is a symbol of prosperity, there was no opportunity to personally contact the ruler. Now, however, only Musta‘idd Hān’s own colleague Bakhtawar Hān stands between Aurangzīb and himself. Within this particular anecdote, Musta‘idd Hān underlines how far he has already climbed up the career ladder, presenting the longest anecdote of the text with himself in the central position. Equally, the protagonist comes down from his former untouchable heights and becomes a human character to play a passive minor role.

Musta‘idd Hān is the initiator of the present anecdote, as he received the old farmer’s complaint and forwarded it to Bakhtawar Hān. Musta‘idd Hān’s intention and narrative strategy thus become particularly clear: he wants to place himself into the text, while also humanising Aurangzīb. This is particularly striking if we compare the direct speech of Musta‘idd Hān and Aurangzīb. Aurangzīb still commands, but so does the author. Whereas Aurangzīb asks for forgiveness in his direct speech, the dominant linguistic ductus is on Musta‘idd Hān’s side. This is especially clear when the old man asks for an audience with Musta‘idd Hān a few days later, who receives him in front of his tent like an actual ruler.

I (Musta‘idd Hān) asked: ‘Who are you?’ He (the old man) replied: ‘I am the man, who has come to such a good fortune through the help of you and your Hān. ‘Be you blessed!’ I rejoined, and took him to the (Bakhtawar) Hān, who also made him some presents.<sup>582</sup>

By comparing both quotes, we witness reversed roles: the emperor begs to be allowed to apologise (which considerably increases sympathy towards the sovereign), while Musta‘idd Hān receives the reports of his servants in order to look after the fate of the desperate old man. Not only is the content of the direct speech opposed (asking for forgiveness on the ruler’s side vs distribution of blessing on the part of the author), but its style is as well. Aurangzīb’s apology is long and detailed, while Musta‘idd Hān speaks with a brief and commanding tone (‘Who are you?’/‘Be you blessed’). Furthermore, the old man only speaks directly to the author, solely thanking the latter. Of course, we must assume that he thanked the emperor if this anecdote actually did occur. However, what matters here it is the textual

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<sup>582</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma’āsiri-ālamgīrī*, 135; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma’āsiri-ālamgīrī*, 83.

rendering, which initiates the protagonist's anthropomorphisation and Musta'idd Hān's conscious self-staging.

Musta'idd Hān successfully manages to incorporate both narrative techniques within this single anecdote (namely the reduction of distance between the other characters and the protagonist). With these two steps, he puts Aurangzīb on the same level as the narrative's other characters and his intended recipient in order to increase the sympathy towards the ruler. Moreover, he confidently positions himself within his text, while reducing Aurangzīb to a minor character.

It is precisely this humanisation that has particularly grabbed me after reading a few chapters. I argue that, within the author's decision to describe his protagonist as a human character, we can recognise the author's self-confidence. Although it was not necessarily a revolutionary step, it was still dangerous and courageous. With the humanisation of the protagonist underway from the eleventh chapter onwards, the author begins to position himself within the text. This is an essential characteristic of the second half of the text and can be summarised in the following way: the degradation of the formerly omnipotent ruler to a human, vulnerable, and therefore erroneous character is combined with the courageous and confident self-positioning of the influential munšī Musta'idd Hān.

A careful reference to certain trends in early modern Europe seems quite appropriate; there, an increasing number of intellectuals and writers appeared ever more strident and tried, each in their own way, to exercise criticism of the nobility from the basis of a new collective self-confidence. Yet, our author at no point fundamentally criticises the entire Mughal system, let alone its rulers. On the contrary, he repeatedly sought to show that a specific Mughal form of meritocracy already existed, one which had been steadily pursued by his protagonist and which made no distinction on the grounds of religious belief so long as individuals devoted themselves to the imperial idea. The author supported this development within his text. On the other hand, we still witness specific criticisms of the ruler, whether it was towards the suspension of road tolls or the partly contradictory design of Dārā, the protagonist's brother. The protagonist's anthropomorphisation must be understood in this particular context, as it was in this way that Musta'idd Hān succeeded in presenting, albeit in an indirect and cautious manner, the protagonist's errors in comprehensible and understandable light to his new ruler and the text's intended recipient. Importantly, the protagonist's anthropomorphisation creates space for new aspiring characters, such as the author himself, since it reduces the gigantic shadow of the all-powerful ruler.

Let us now have a critical look at these narrative techniques, as both considerably shape the text's second half and helped Musta'idd Hān to design Aurangzīb as a human character among many.

## ON THE AUTHOR'S USE OF DIRECT SPEECH

The technique of direct speech (focalisation) contributes significantly to establishing an emotional relationship with the protagonist.<sup>583</sup> It thus satisfies a vital function within the narrative strategy. With regards to the analysis of our protagonist's direct speech, it is surprising that the great majority of it can be found in the last third of the text.<sup>584</sup> What might have been the reasons for this strange positioning of such an important narrative strategy in the text's last third?

First of all, it may be because Musta'idd Hān no longer depended on the *'Ālamgīr-nāma*. He therefore had much more freedom to shape the protagonist according to his own narrative strategy. However, it seems to me that this conspicuously belated use of direct speech has an even more important and deeper cause. Through the delayed and selective use of the direct speech, Musta'idd Hān began the protagonist's humanisation, which significantly contributes to the sympathy and pity felt for the protagonist's actions and decisions. Additionally, the protagonist's direct speech strengthens those basic characteristics that the author wanted his intended recipient to grasp. The following six quotations illustrate the direct properties of the protagonist, such as discipline, an austere lifestyle, eagerness to protect the empire, deep religiosity, loneliness, escapism, and despair.

Before analysing these quotes in detail, I will present three sections of direct speech. So far, these sections have only been quoted by historians in order to describe Aurangzīb as a tyrannical pedant who took every opportunity to oppress his subjects and to declare a holy war over India. However, I suggest alternative interpretations of these controversial passages and posit that other views on the text might owe their existence to another mistranslation by Jadunath Sarkar.

In the twenty-first year of his reign (1677-1678), Aurangzīb ordered the following instructions to be implemented:

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<sup>583</sup> Peter Hühn (ed.), *Point of View, Perspective, and Focalization. Modelling Mediation in Narrative*, Berlin, 2009; William Edmiston, *Hindsight and Insight. Focalization in four Eighteenth-Century French novels*, Pennsylvania, 1991; Dan McIntyre, *Point of view in Plays. A Cognitive Stylistic Approach to Viewpoint in Drama and other Text-Types*, Amsterdam, 2006.

<sup>584</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āzīr-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 201, 261, 294, 313, 371, 471, 509.

(1) I (Aurangzīb) abolish the celebration (...) The clerks should use inkpots of chinaware and gilt stone, instead of silver ones.<sup>585</sup>

Years later, Aurangzīb continued to impose similar restrictions:

(2) Why do you, who are getting double his salary, waste your money, and spend it without any use (in return for it)? The doing of what is required of us as a duty is in itself an evidence of perfection.<sup>586</sup>

Finally, let us look at one the most quoted phrases of Aurangzīb, since this one allegedly demonstrates his desire to wage a holy war across all of India in 1699. Sarkar's translation renders Aurangzīb's statement thus:

(3) My object in this journey is nothing except holy war (*ghaza*), so please God and His Prophet.<sup>587</sup>

To the untrained reader, the first two quotations certainly provoke no sympathy for the protagonist. Rather, they merely prove Aurangzīb's meticulous devotion to order and the pressure and harassment which he unleashes on his subjects. However, for the intended recipient, it was clear which social group had had their privileges reduced: the influential clerics. This is especially interesting when we consider that Aurangzīb is typically portrayed as an ultra-orthodox ruler, whose ultimate goal should have been to expand the clergy's privileges. However, I would argue that Musta'idd Ḥān used these statements to underline the austere and pragmatic attitudes of the emperor, as well as to demonstrate his propensity for egalitarian measures. Musta'idd Ḥān describes these attitudes as essential characteristics of Aurangzīb. In this way, the protagonist gains the respect and recognition of the intended recipient. The direct speech in quotation (1) therefore confirms the basic feature of the protagonist.

It is no different with the second quote. Here again, it seems to be a paternalistic ruler speaks who speaks, one whose sole intent is to harass his subjects. However, this section was intended to teach Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur a valuable lesson. This can be deduced from the fact that the quote comes at the end of a longer section which describes those generals who flamboyantly wore far too many weapons while visiting the court and whom the ruler considered far too pompous. The following poem, which directly adjoins the protagonist's direct speech, is crucial. Once again, poetry's importance in regard to the narrative strategy of

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<sup>585</sup> Idem, 162; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 100.

<sup>586</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 469; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 278.

<sup>587</sup> Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 249.

our author becomes clear: ‘Only a little of life is left/and yet the master of the house is senseless with pride.’<sup>588</sup> The quote urges Aurangzīb’s nobles to have a frugal lifestyle, while the subsequent poem demands that they avoid unnecessary pomp, especially when there are no resources available (‘only a little of life is left’). Here, the direct speech and the poem complement and encourage the key principles of this section, namely the protagonist’s desire for a sober lifestyle and aversion to any kind of ostentatiousness.

Let us now have a quick look at quotation (3) in Sarkar’s translation (‘My object in this journey is nothing except holy war (ghaza), so please God and His Prophet’). At first glance, only a little room for an alternative reading is left, as we read in black and white that Aurangzīb was focused on declaring a holy war. However, Sarkar directly intervened in the translation in order to cement the image of a religious fanatic. He provides the original term for holy war (*ghaza*) in parentheses in order to prove that he consistently adhered to the edition and to allow others to check the translation themselves. However, this is a critical blunder: *gaza*<sup>589</sup> has nothing to do with the concept of a holy war (*ḡihād*).<sup>590</sup> This needs to be discussed briefly.<sup>591</sup>

The term *gaza* goes back to the early history of Islam and indicates targeted expeditions against infidels which were legitimised and organised by the Prophet Muḥammad. Al-Wāqidī (died 823) was the first to use the term *maḡāzī*.<sup>592</sup> The key here is that the use of force against civilians was authorised only under very exceptional circumstances: the primary goal of these raids,<sup>593</sup> which were carried out by a small group of Bedouins, was the rapid capture of camels and trade goods on the route between Mecca and Medina. These actions have nothing to do with the concept of a *ḡihād*. Rather, a *gaza* was primarily directed against the feuding tribes in Mecca in order to weaken them economically when they became more and more

<sup>588</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 469.

<sup>589</sup> A good example of the mistranslation of the term *gaza* as holy war can be seen in Peter Partner’s well-received comparative analysis of holy wars in Christianity and Islam, see idem, *God of battles. Holy Wars of Christianity and Islam*, Princeton, 1997, 210.

<sup>590</sup> See also the well-received study by Suleiman Mourad and James Lindsay, *The Intensification and Reorientation of Sunni Jihad Ideology in the Crusader Period. Ibn ‘Asākir of Damascus (1105 - 1176) and His Age, with an Edition and Translation of Ibn ‘Asākir’s The Forty Hadiths for Inciting Jihad*, Leiden, 2013, e.g. 16-17.

<sup>591</sup> For other misinterpretations of Aurangzeb’s concept of Jihad, see Jaswanat Mehta, *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, New Delhi, 1987, 57; idem, *Advanced Study in the History of Modern India 1707-1813*, New Delhi, 2005, 2.

<sup>592</sup> Martin Hinds, ‘Al-Maghāzī’ in Peri Bearman, et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Brill Online, 2015, <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2>, last accessed 5/3/2013.

<sup>593</sup> ‘The term has passed into French in the form *rezzou*, which preserves the original meaning of *ḡhazw*, whilst it is the synonym *ḡhāziya* (pl. *ḡhawāzī*) which has given the English word *razzia*, current also in French (where, however, with the verb *razzier*, it tends to have a pejorative implication)’, Hinds, ‘Al-Maghāzī’.

aggressive towards the fledgling Muslim community in Medina. After the successful completion of such a raid, the leader had to stand trial before the prophet and give a detailed report, as Martin Hinds describes in his classic definition of *ḡaza*:

Since the acquisition of camels was the aim of a *ḡazu*, very little blood was ordinarily shed during the course of it, mercy (*manʿ*) being freely granted. Indeed, the whole course of a *ḡazu* was governed by elaborate protocol.<sup>594</sup>

Let us now look at the critical quote once again, but with Sarkar's explanation of the term *ḡaza* removed: 'My object in this journey is nothing except *ḡaza*, so please God and His Prophet.' Now it is clear that this direct speech should be seen as an indirect instruction to the protagonist's successor: the new ruler should lead the coming frontier wars under the strict regulations of a *ḡaza* in order to not unnecessarily damage the prestige of the empire.

The appeal to the concept of *ḡaza* is not only evinced by the protagonist's direct reference to his ultimate role model, the Prophet himself, whom he seeks to please with this particular military action ('so please God and His Prophet'). Mustaʿidd Ḥān also endeavours to indicate that his protagonist expressly referred to the concept of *ḡaza* just a few sentences later, where he ends a victorious battle according to the strict regulations imposed on this form of conflict. This fight, too long to be quoted here, follows the aforementioned controversial quote. After days of costly struggle, the surrender of a fortress was finally announced and the protagonist permitted the defenders free passage without any form of punishment, to the surprise of all the witnesses.

As the Emperor is the protector of the weak, he graciously ordered that the garrison should be allowed to go out without their arms, instead of being put to the sword. At night the enemy got their opportunity of evacuating the fort.<sup>595</sup>

Evidently, Mustaʿidd Ḥān sought to show that his protagonist acted with mercy (*manʿ*), a quality which Hinds defined as a core element of *ḡaza*.<sup>596</sup>

The three quoted pronouncements of the ruler, which at first sight certainly seem perfectly suited for describing Aurangzīb as a radical tyrant, turn out on closer inspection to be indirect instructions to the new ruler. They demand that the latter should govern pragmatically and efficiently (quotes 1 and 2) and also act mercifully towards the vanquished (quote 3).

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<sup>594</sup> Thomas Johnstone, 'Ghazw' in Peri Bearman, et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Brill Online, 2013, <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2>, last accessed 10/4/2013.

<sup>595</sup> Mustaʿidd Ḥān, *Maʿāṣir-i Ālamgīrī*, 411; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Maʿāṣir-i Ālamgīrī*, 249.

<sup>596</sup> Johnstone, *Ghazw*.



Moreover, these three citations correspond to the aforementioned textures-of-time argument. Here, scholars have argued that a certain connection exists between contemporary poets and their intended recipients whereby the latter are able to understand the historiographical content of prosaic texts. Following this reasoning, it seems reasonable to assume that the same connection existed between our author and his intended recipient, Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur. This means that the latter probably grasped the author’s allusions and the core meaning behind his direct speech, which functions as an indirect mirror of a just Muslim ruler.

In addition to these statements of the protagonist, the author placed other instances of direct speech into his text which are much less difficult to analyse, since they reaffirm other key characteristics of Aurangzīb. These characteristics are discussed below, but I will mention them briefly here to complete the analysis of direct speech’s function in the text. It is very interesting that Aurangzīb’s religiosity was simply one quality among many and thus not the dominant feature that one would expect from a description of a religious fanatic. Instead, the vast majority of the protagonist’s statements bear witness to his self-confidence and sense of justice, as the following anecdote testifies. Furthermore, the following direct speech is particularly exciting, as Bahādur Šāh Alam is at the centre of the action.

Yes, but the King of kings - supreme is His wisdom - has made me ruler of the habitable globe; so that wherever oppression is practised by anybody on another, the victim may hope that he will complain to me and will thus secure justice. Owing to certain earthly considerations, I have inflicted hardship upon him. But the time has not yet come for releasing him. He has no asylum except the Court of God. Then, he ought to be kept in hope that he may not despair of me and complain to God; for, if he complains to God, where shall I have refuge?’ As it was destined that this Prince would one day become sovereign, the Emperor’s heart was inclined to this that the Prince would come out of his sufferings and troubles into the sunshine of royal favour. He began to give gradual and systematic relief to the Prince, with every caution and care so that even a fly might not trouble this soul-sick patient.<sup>597</sup>

Here, it was obviously important for Musta‘idd Hān to place the protagonist’s human side into the foreground. While Aurangzīb confidently perceives himself as a divinely appointed ruler who reigns over the globe, we also clearly recognise his anger and disappointment at the deeds of his son, whose rebellious behaviour he could not pardon at the section’s beginning. The key here is Musta‘idd Hān’s use of closure. He does not mention the actual crime of the intended recipient so as to avoid shedding a negative light onto his new ruler and patron;

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<sup>597</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma’āsiri-ī ‘Ālamgīrī*, 342; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma’āsiri ‘Ālamgīrī*, 206.

rather, the core content of the closure is Aurangzīb's fatherly care towards his suffering son. In this sense, both Aurangzīb and Mu'azzam receive positive descriptions: gentleness and forgiveness are ascribed to the protagonist, while the text's intended recipient is noted as being repentant and then helpful.

Another important sort of direct speech deals with the ruler's deep religiosity. Here, it is noteworthy that Musta'idd Hān did not connect these specific sections with violence; rather, they often describe the protagonist's religious knowledge and his interest in theological disputations. This comes across in the following statement, which describes the ruler's astonishment after a lengthy theological discussion: 'The Emperor said to the Hān, 'You will not believe that the greatest of scholars has said so the fear that we feel springs from the thought of how our acts would be judged by God'.<sup>598</sup>

Finally, direct speech often presents the protagonist's unmediated emotions. It is precisely in these passages that we realise that direct speech is used by the author to prove Aurangzīb's withdrawal from the world. It is remarkable that, for the first ten years of the text, which still refers to the *'Ālamgiir-nāma* in which Aurangzīb gets constantly characterized as exactly the opposite of a desperate and isolated king, only three and very short sections report on the protagonist's joy.<sup>599</sup> Whereas the vast majority symbolise poignant grief, frustration, and desperation, especially in the text's second half. The following phrase of Aurangzīb's represents the protagonist's basic mood throughout the whole text: 'Alas! Alas! He struck his hands on the two knees and continued saying, I have razed to the ground the work of forty years.'<sup>600</sup>

The use of direct speech (*focalisation*) is a crucial part of Musta'idd Hān's narrative strategy, as it allows the author to initiate the protagonist's humanisation. Musta'idd Hān cleverly placed this important narrative technique at the end of the text so that the intended recipient could forge an emotional connection to his father and the *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī*'s protagonist at this point: this would allow him to feel compassion for him and to forgive his mistakes as ruler.

Besides the use of direct speech, Musta'idd Hān had another narrative technique which allowed him to portray the protagonist as a suffering human character rather than an unapproachable ruler.

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<sup>598</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 164-165, also e.g. 520f.

<sup>599</sup> Ibid., 23, 38, 47.

<sup>600</sup> Idem, 249, I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 179.

This incipient depletion of the distance between the protagonist and other characters and its impact within the author's narrative strategy will be analysed in the upcoming second section.

## THE END OF THE PROTAGONIST'S PATHOS OF DISTANCE

The notion of the 'pathos of distance'<sup>601</sup> was discussed by Friedrich Nietzsche, and describes well how Musta'idd Hān, in the first part of his text, deploys the protagonist within a particular scene. For Nietzsche, the pathos of distance expressed the noble's feeling of superiority and determines the right of the aristocratic and high-minded man to remove himself from the ordinary and passive mass, the so-called 'herd animals', and to judge and command them.

Within the first part of the text, Musta'idd Hān used a similar distance between the protagonist and the other characters to describe Aurangzīb as an unapproachable character who successfully consolidated his power in the wars of succession. The turn starts at the beginning of the eleventh chapter, where Musta'idd Hān slowly begins to lessen the distance between the characters. The aforementioned anecdote about the begging miller starts this process. From this point onwards, Aurangzīb continuously seeks proximity with other characters and emerges from his isolation. However, the proximity between Aurangzīb and the surrounding characters was by no means a fictitious part of our author's narrative. Such closeness between the ruler/patron and subjects played an extremely important part in the legitimisation of rule. It was a fixed ritual at the Mughal court, as Gommans shows below:

More generally speaking, in Mughal India power relationships were indicated by the image of near and far, in and out, or movement in either direction, less so by the modern western metaphor of up-down and front-back. In the same spirit, physical contact was an act of political attachment and incorporation. Gestures such as the emperor approaching the amir, or laying his hand on the amir's back, or even embracing him, were all signals of the amir's special ties to the emperor's household. It appears that even emotional outbursts like weeping were part and parcel of the staged, courtly protocol and an expression of special favour. Weeping mostly occurred during official farewells, such as in the case of the leaving of Hān Jahan Lodi. He was a prominent and intimate amir of Jahangir who had repeatedly taken him into the female apartments and treated him 'as a friend'. In 1609 the Hān was sent to the Deccan and, at the time of his departure, the king descended from the public and private balcony and placed his own turban on the Hān's head, took his hand and set him on his horse. An order was also issued

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<sup>601</sup> Noel Macainsh, *The Pathos of Distance*, Frankfurt am Main, 1992, also Daniel Conway, *Nietzsche and the Political*, London, 1997, 40 f; Volker Gerhardt, *Pathos und Distanz. Studien zur Philosophie Friedrich Nietzsches*, Stuttgart, 1988.

that, as he went, he should beat his drums. On one side the king and on the other side Ḥān Jahan indulged in ‘unrestrained weeping’ on account of the impending separation.<sup>602</sup>

Musta‘idd Ḥān must have been aware of the significance of this important part of legitimization of rule and thus placed it into his text. We have already seen in Gommans’ and Flores’ arguments that publicly staged emotions played a crucial role within Mughal political life. Thus, it seems only logical that Musta‘idd Ḥān also used this closeness between the characters as a strategy to evoke sympathy from his intended recipient in relation to his father’s actions. In this way, the protagonist appears no longer as the unapproachable and flawless emperor. Rather, as we shall see in a moment, the protagonist develops into a sympathetic ruler who took care of his subjects and respected their needs.

Musta‘idd Ḥān staged this reduction of distance between the characters very cleverly and in different ways in order to prevent this decisive narrative strategy from appearing clumsy and superficial. The reduction is portrayed, for example, through the symbolism of the ruler’s hand<sup>603</sup> and through the kissing of royal feet.<sup>604</sup> These important parts of the royal body are mentioned several times in the text and, interestingly, all in the text’s second part. This no doubt highlights that the protagonist is seeking closeness with the other ‘ordinary’ characters, since it was from these hands that the emperor dispensed salutations, forgiveness, and gifts. The hands also heal, transmitting the emperor’s healing power and spiritual knowledge to other characters. Furthermore, the hand symbolises his creative power, as is shown in the following excerpt where Aurangzīb helps to build a mosque: ‘the emperor laid a few stones with his own hands in order to accumulate spiritual merit.’<sup>605</sup> This particular meaning and the function of the ‘sacred’ royal hand is also emphasised by other Mughal chroniclers and runs like a red thread through their texts (a comparative analysis with the sacred healing power of French kings and their hands could certainly deliver interesting results). For example, Gūl-Badan Bīgum (ca. 1523-1603) writes in the *Humāyūn-nāma* about the blessed hand of the emperor as it handles some food: ‘(...) they made fires on all four sides, and with his own blessed hand the Emperor roasted some meat’.<sup>606</sup> Furthermore, the royal hand receives special attention when it comes to the *topoi* of healing. This can be noted in some anecdotes about Aurangzīb: ‘when the Emperor arrived, he (Aurangzīb) ordered the prince to put off his arms

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<sup>602</sup> Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*, 59.

<sup>603</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 224, 265, 295, 323, 372.

<sup>604</sup> Idem, 72, 76, 371, 372, 373.

<sup>605</sup> Idem, 346.

<sup>606</sup> Beveridge, *The History of Humāyūn*, 133.

and come nearer, in order did the Emperor might, with *His own hand*, rub him over with the essence.<sup>607</sup>

Next to the use of the royal hand, the reduction of distance is implied in very small fragments of text which are nevertheless of great importance in terms of the author's narrative strategy, as the following example shows: 'For two hours the Emperor viewed the condition of the fort on foot'.<sup>608</sup> This demonstrates that the author was deliberately staging his protagonist as a soldier-emperor, a characterisation which is closely related to his discipline and his austere lifestyle. With this small phrase, Musta'idd Hān shows that his protagonist had no problem climbing down from his royal horse to step directly into the mud and to personally inspect the battlefield. This isolated quote may seem irrelevant at first glance, but Musta'idd Hān actually used it as a sideswipe against Dara's shortcomings. The latter remained sitting on his horse while his soldiers had to suffer in full armour underneath the burning sun. Thus, as far as Dārā is concerned, Musta'idd Hān deliberately maintained the pathos of distance between the rulers and ordinary subordinates.

At this point, a comparative analysis with contemporaneous European rulers who staged themselves specifically as soldier-kings is sagacious. A possible comparison comes to mind with Aurangzīb's contemporaries Friedrich Wilhelm I (1688-1740) and, albeit to a lesser extent, Friedrich II (1712-1786). The latter, in the critical phase of the Seven Years War (1756-1763), distributed images around Berlin showing his exhausted sleep after the hardships of the battle, surrounded by his common soldiers and officers: this specifically underlined his proximity to his loyal men, whatever rank they may have been. The effect of this propaganda was enormous.<sup>609</sup> It seems correct to assume that Aurangzīb, who gave himself only a minimal income and sewed hats in order to donate the proceeds of their sale to charity, was well aware of the propagandistic value of this kind of depiction.<sup>610</sup> It was in this way that he distanced himself from his splendour-loving predecessors and created a new and highly effective form of legitimation of rule. Musta'idd Hān must have been aware of this effect, since he designed it to be a key feature of his protagonist in his text, as we shall see in the next section.

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<sup>607</sup> Marc Bloch, *Die wunderbaren Könige*, Munich, 1998, 306.

<sup>608</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 298.

<sup>609</sup> Sebastian Haffner, *Preußen ohne Legende*, Berlin, 1999, 137-142.

<sup>610</sup> Anees Jahan, *Aurangzeb in Muntakhab-al lubab*, Bombay, 1977, xxviii. For Sir Walter Norris' description of Aurangzeb's lifestyle and his low private income, see Faraz Anjum, 'Conditions of Common People under the Mughals. A Critical Study of Representations of European Travellers' in *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, vol. 47, no. 2, 2010, 33-64.

In other passages, Musta‘idd Hān explicitly underscores the fact that his protagonist sought proximity to those characters who deserved to be honoured in this specific way. For example, the author notes that Aurangzīb invited a nobleman into his inner circle who had previously been excluded: ‘Formerly he (the noble man) had to stand outside the barrier (*katra*) railing. The Emperor now graciously gave him the honour of standing within it.’<sup>611</sup> These clear indications, consistent with Gommans’ argument, are generally to be found in the text’s *closure*,<sup>612</sup> thus making it obvious that Musta‘idd Hān was conscious of the effectiveness of such a strategy. He did everything he could to secure sympathy of his intended recipient for the protagonist’s actions. The author’s pursuit becomes much more transparent when almost identical phrases occur in the same setting. For instance, ‘He then came with the Emperor (...) Offered two-fold prayers and what permitted to kiss the feet. The Emperor kissed his forehead’<sup>613</sup> is followed only two pages later by ‘He then went with His Majesty (and) kissed his feet, kissing his forehead the Emperor.’<sup>614</sup>

Finally, the narrative function of robes must quickly be mentioned, as it contributes to creating an identification of the recipient with the ruler and the kingdom. Phrases like the following appear regularly within the text: ‘The Hān Bahadur Hamiduddin which rewarded with a robe, a fathpech and doshala from the Emperor’s own wardrobe.’<sup>615</sup> Once again, Gommans argues that:

This was the almost routine bestowal of khilats, or dresses of honour, by the emperor upon his amirs, hence the importance attached to the public wardrobe. In principle, the khilats had been worn by the emperor himself and, therefore, their acceptance symbolised the incorporation of the amir into the body of the emperor who incarnated the empire. As dramatically expressed by F.W. Buckler, the amirs became the *membra corporis regis*, in other words, participants and sharers in the body politic.<sup>616</sup>

The importance of this narrative instrument is especially evident given the fact that robes (*hal*) occur more than 480 times in the text.<sup>617</sup> Musta‘idd Hān constantly uses this specific tool in intense and dramatic chapters, since he could be very sure of the emotional

<sup>611</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma’āsiri-ī Ālamgīrī*, 360, I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma’āsiri Ālamgīrī*, 217.

<sup>612</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma’āsiri-ī Ālamgīrī*, 346, 361, 371, 373.

<sup>613</sup> Idem, 371.

<sup>614</sup> Idem, 373.

<sup>615</sup> Idem, 488.

<sup>616</sup> Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*, 59-60.

<sup>617</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma’āsiri-ī Ālamgīrī*, 27, 32, 86, 88, 49, 50, 70, 77, 78, 81, 82, 86.

significance of this political act: the staging of the giving and receipt of royal robes of honour has a long past in Islamic history. For example, during the time of the Mamluks, we find numerous examples of them using these robes of honour for diplomatic reasons.<sup>618</sup> In regard to the narrative strategy of our author, we can rightly assume that he must have been aware of this political importance, as he placed the act at crucial points within his text.

In the second section, two main narrative techniques were presented which Mustā'idd Ḥān uses to initiate the protagonist's anthropomorphisation. Firstly, there is the targeted use of direct speech, which allowed the intended recipient to gain insight into the protagonist and to establish an emotional connection with the actions of his predecessor. Secondly, there is the degradation of the pathos of distance between the characters and the protagonist: this involves the author's dismantling of the protagonist's unapproachable status in order to portray a human character among many. This incipient anthropomorphisation serves the author decisively in his struggle to consolidate sympathy for his protagonist's actions and decisions. With this in mind, we will now analyse the protagonist's discipline, surprisingly unorthodox behaviour, and magnanimity.

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<sup>618</sup> Fortunately, a detailed study on this topic has been presented in Stewart Gordon (ed.), *Robes of Honour. Khil'at in Pre-colonial India*, New Delhi, 2003; see also Mose Sharon (ed.), *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization. In Honour of Professor David Ayalon*, Leiden, 1986, 188f; Marios Hadjianastasis (ed.), *Frontiers of the Ottoman Imagination. Studies in Honour of Rhoads Murphey*, Leiden, 2015.

### SECTION 3: ON DISCIPLINE, UNORTHODOX BEHAVIOUR, AND MAGNANIMITY - THE PROTAGONIST'S OTHER THREE DOMINANT FEATURES IN THE *MA 'ĀṢIR-I 'ĀLAMGĪRĪ*

*(...) but no valet owing to the simplicity of his wardrobe, almost invariably a threadbare military uniform stained with snuff. In Frederick's opinion, regal robes had no practical use (...).* - Niall Ferguson on the alleged exceptionalism of Friedrich II's (1712-1786) spartan lifestyle and discipline in comparison to contemporary Muslim rulers.<sup>619</sup>

*(...) In his private chamber, he never reposed on a cushion (and) he never wore garmets declared impure by the canon (such as robes and unmixed silk yarn), and not at all used vessels of gold and silver.* - Musta'idd Hān describes the properties of his protagonist.<sup>620</sup>

*Kingship is not maintained without discipline.* - Aurangzīb Alamgir.<sup>621</sup>

#### NO JOY FOR AURANGZĪB?

I began to become interested in analysing the protagonist's discipline and that of his closest entourage for two major reasons. First of all, I soon realised that this characteristic plays a considerable role in the chronicle itself. I began to wonder whether Aurangzīb would ever laugh, if he would ever indulge in the court's pleasures, or when the text would start discussing his favourite wife. However, none of this ever happened, and it soon became clear that the description of Aurangzīb's sobriety and discipline played a crucial part within Musta'idd Hān's complex narrative strategy. This particular style of writing has long been interpreted as a sign of Musta'idd Hān's inadequacies as a chronicler. I, however, seek to show the opposite. Secondly, as I began my work, Niall Ferguson's recently published study fell into my hands: its auspicious title (*Civilisation: The Rest and the West*) caught my attention. I thought that this kind of argumentation was long gone, but, as shown before, Ferguson is far from alone in using this kind of reasoning.

Ferguson interprets the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the period in which Musta'idd Hān grew up and wrote his version of Aurangzīb's rule, as the origin point of the great divergence between a stagnant and despotic Asia on the one side and a rational, economising

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<sup>619</sup> Ferguson, *Civilization*, 74.

<sup>620</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma 'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 525; Musta'idd Hān, *Ma 'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 312.

<sup>621</sup> Bilimoria, *Ruka'at-i-Alamgiri*, 131. See also: Abdul Islahi, 'Works of Economic Interest in the Seventeenth-Century Muslim World' in *Thoughts on Economics*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2008, 35-50, 47 f.



Europe on the other. It was the unique work ethic, discipline, and integrity of the Prussian elites and officials who represented the European *Zeitgeist* of that epoch: it was one which many believe had no equivalent in Asia. Friedrich II (1712-1786) serves as the representative of enlightened European monarchs who only had the good of the people had in mind. Asia, meanwhile, was allegedly ruled by incompetent and corrupt rulers who were detached from affairs of state. They were generally brought up in the harem and, once in power, only functioned as puppets of their even more corrupt viziers. Here ‘Uṣmān III (1699-1757) serves as his example, perfectly symbolising the early modern Muslim ruler in Asia.<sup>622</sup>

I am certainly not interested in giving Ferguson’s study too much attention. The approach of the present section is not a systematic structural comparison of Prussia and early Mughal India under Aurangzīb, as profitable as such a study might be. At this point, Ferguson’s reasoning serves merely to show a popular argument within historical research and cultural studies, which, it seems, still refuse to enter into dialogue with the smaller disciplines.<sup>623</sup> This being said, within the present section I seek to answer the question of *why* Musta‘idd Ḥān gave such weight to the allegedly unique European values such as discipline, austerity, work ethic, honour, and soldiership in order to stylise the ideal Muslim ruler of the second half of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Furthermore, which factors did the author use to legitimise the protagonist’s rule and how did they fit into his narrative strategy?

In this sense, it is interesting to look at the contrast between the way in which our author characterises Aurangzīb and Ferguson’s discussion. The former, a Muslim secretary in the precise period about which Ferguson wrote, certainly did not consider his protagonist to be a lazy and decadent harem ruler who neglected the affairs of state, indulging freely in wine, women, and leisure. On the contrary, Musta‘idd Ḥān embodied the ideal of a Muslim ruler in his protagonist: he is depicted as an absolute workaholic who felt no happiness outside of labour and only rarely expressed positive emotions. This is obvious at the very beginning of the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. In these ten chapters, only three very short examples of Aurangzīb’s joy are mentioned. These refer to his pleasure in hunting,<sup>624</sup> enjoying traveling to Kašmīr,<sup>625</sup> and, finally, his feelings for Abdul Bāqim’s moon poem, which he liked.<sup>626</sup>

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<sup>622</sup> For the entire comparative approach see idem, ‘*Osman and Fritz*’, 71-85.

<sup>623</sup> Please see my discussion on the studies of Riskin, Huff, Winkler and Francés Ferguson in the second prelude of the present chapter.

<sup>624</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 38.

<sup>625</sup> Idem, 47.

<sup>626</sup> Idem, 23.

However, it is not just the fact that these references to pleasure beyond work are short that makes them notable; equally interesting is that they are directly combined with previous or subsequent disasters that Aurangzīb and his entourage had to suffer. The hunting scene ends in disaster: many innocent hunters are killed. The Kašmīri scene ends with a catastrophe that totally destroys the image of a Mughal paradise. Musta‘idd Ḥān indeed explicitly emphasised, only shortly before the reference to Aurangzīb enjoying his visit to Kašmīr, that the latter had decided to never visit this terrible place again after the loss of all his troops.<sup>627</sup> The remark that Aurangzīb had actually enjoyed this trip must rather be seen as a clear demonstration of power and not as personal enjoyment and relaxation: the fact that Aurangzīb makes the trip and enjoys it despite the previous disaster emphasises his bravery. The same applies to the moon poem. Although this anecdote does not end directly in a disaster, this short notice about the sovereign’s acceptance of the poem does not denote actual pleasure. Instead, the acceptance served the protagonist’s legitimisation of his rule. Therefore, the phrase ‘the emperor liked it’ directly relates to labour, rule, and rational calculation. There is certainly nothing about true joy, wine, or women in the text: indeed, what joy Aurangzīb does show outside his work is either betrayed by immediate disaster or was expressed to serve a political purpose.

This austere tone of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* is crucial. It seems very probable that Musta‘idd Ḥān wanted to show that tremendous disasters would follow if the ruler allowed himself to visibly relax. The author has no interest in depicting rulers who lie about at ease, as his description of Dārā, Aurangzīb’s double in the first ten years of the chronicle, shows. Here, the author expressly mentions that it was the prince’s laziness and love of pleasure that caused his coming defeat: ‘(...)As Dārā enjoyed a comfortable break, his army (Aurangzīb’s) returned, whereupon Dārā went into the wilderness.’<sup>628</sup>

Musta‘idd Ḥān sought to present to his intended recipient a king who distinguished himself through three qualities: a spartan lifestyle, a frugal attitude, and a consistently disciplined work ethic. This is clear, for example, in his description of the protagonist’s decision to abolish the ritual of weighing the emperor in gold.<sup>629</sup> Interestingly, this new austere governance did not remain unnoticed by contemporary European travellers and writers who visited Aurangzīb’s court. Jorge Flores discusses the diverse perceptions of the Mughal succession crises and the new ruler Aurangzīb among the European powers then operating in

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<sup>627</sup> Idem, 46.

<sup>628</sup> Idem, 18.

<sup>629</sup> Idem, 75.

India. Their mixed emotions were not only marked by their fear of a religious fanatic, but also by a hope for stability and admiration for the king's new style of government. Bernier (1625-1685), for example, considered him to be a great politician and king. As Flores describes:

For his hero Aurangzīb to remain a pedagogically effective example, he takes care to underline that he is [...] a king in every way, on which any king can model himself and Aurangzīb serves consequently as an example for all princes' (...) Reason of State prevails and Machiavellian political realism is present and noted, for the real tyrant is he who maintains himself in power without having the qualities to wield it, not one who is a gifted ruler and has the abilities to assure political stability in his reign. Bernier's exercise, defending the 'legitimate tyrant', is not much removed from the Spaniard Mártir Rizo's position, in *Vida de Rómulo* (1626) (...) And it is certain that Bernier's Aurangzīb provoked a lively debate in Europe concerning the nature and limits of royal sovereignty.<sup>630</sup>

However, Musta'idd Hān does not just use this particular method to portray his protagonist: Aurangzīb's discipline also emerges in tragic settings, such as funerals. At both his brother's and father's funerals, no tears are shed; instead, work gets done.

### DOING BUSINESS AT FAMILY FUNERALS

The fact that Musta'idd Hān sought to portray the protagonist's work ethic as a role model for all princes (as elucidated by Bernier in his observations) becomes clear in a very specific and important type of setting: the public burial. One would expect that the author would have used this kind of setting to underline the protagonist's withdrawal from the world: it seems to be a perfect opportunity to describe him as a suffering king and thus increase the reader's sympathy. However, the opposite occurs. It is precisely on such important occasions that Musta'idd Hān brings Aurangzīb's *raison d'état* and disciplined work ethic to the fore. In her recent study, Ruby Lal has underlined the political significance of the public funeral. Although she refers here to the tragic death of Adham Hān (died 1562), we can safely assume that similar issues of power and factional infighting were present in the centre of Aurangzīb's entourage immediately after the death of Šāh Ġāhān.

Narratives on the death (...) are particularly instructive (...) The events surrounding Adham Hān's death suggest a peculiar mix of political ambition, intrigue, the aspirations of people

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<sup>630</sup> Flores, 'I Will Do as My Father Did', 13.

close to the emperor seeking to achieve higher ranks, as well as the emotional bonds and relationships (...).<sup>631</sup>

Musta‘idd Hān ultimately sought to show the funeral as a political act in his text. At both the funerals of Dārā and Šāh Ğāhān, the emperor’s work ethic and his performance of duty are put at the centre of the description and appear to be much more important than the process of grieving. At his brother’s funeral, the recipient is only informed of the numerous promotions and orders which Aurangzīb issued.<sup>632</sup> Aurangzīb remained for a few days longer in Agra after his father’s death, the reason being that there was hard work which needed to be done: ‘It was necessary for him to stay in Agra because of specific work.’<sup>633</sup>

What Musta‘idd Hān initiated in the text’s first half through the use of pointed settings, such as funerals, is now continuously expanded within the second section. The protagonist’s withdrawal from the world, discipline, and work ethic become his predominant characteristics. Moreover, the author adds several anecdotes into the text, all of which imply his duty and service to the state. For example, the nobles are described as workaholics: Aurangzīb’s praise is emphasised when the nobles do their duty, and they are described very disparagingly when they neglect it. Again and again, the author mentions the disciplining of nature, the army’s need to move quickly in order to stay on schedule, and the acts and achievements of each individual. These regular references to the need for discipline and an austere lifestyle culminate in an obituary of a deceased nobleman whose mania for work is described in almost miraculous terms. Let us now look at these examples more closely.

#### AURANGZĪB: THE *MA’ĀSIR-I ĀLAMGĪRĪ*’S WORKAHOLIC

Aurangzīb’s will to complete his work unconditionally is expressed in sentences like the following one, where mobility and duty are both mentioned: ‘Muhtasham Hān, faujdar of Miwat, was interviewed while the Emperor was riding.’<sup>634</sup> The protagonist demands that his officers also show a strong commitment to their work; even if they are sick, they nevertheless have to answer the ruler’s questions, for which they are rewarded if they can provide satisfactory results: ‘Hamid Hān was ill, was interviewed by the Emperor, and was kindly ordered to stay in Burhanpur until his perfect recovery. The Emperor, untying the balaband

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<sup>631</sup> Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World*, Cambridge, 2005, 202.

<sup>632</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma’āsir-i Ālamgīrī*, 27.

<sup>633</sup> Idem, 54.

<sup>634</sup> Idem, 181; took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma’āsiri Ālamgiri*, 111.

from his own waist, presented it to him.’<sup>635</sup> Here again, Musta‘idd Hān underlines the ruler’s proximity to those who received rewards, since it demonstrates that he took good care of his subordinates.

Once ill officers were on the road to recovery, there was nothing more important for the ruler than to know that they had immediately returned to work, even if they had suffered terrible injuries: ‘His waist and (some) other limbs were severely bruised. After a month he was able to leave his bed, had an audience, received a special sarpech, and returned to his work.’<sup>636</sup> On other occasions, Musta‘idd Hān repeatedly stresses that his protagonist regularly called his highest nobles for an interview in order to be exactly informed of their current tasks. Aurangzeb ordered that on Sundays and Thursdays Ināyat Allāh Hān and other noblemen should come to him for reporting on the diwani business.<sup>637</sup>

The author also highlights the fact that Aurangzīb preferred being surrounded solely by industrious and creative nobles, showing no interest in any kind of nepotism. He ordered that only ‘(...) the admission into the imperial service of professional men and men of skill (...)’ was to be permitted.<sup>638</sup> These men were in turn aware of the ruler’s continual examinations and demands. The author explicitly tells us that they were expected to constantly improve their skills and that that they were proud by showing ‘(...) the fruits of good training. (Hence) (...) the macebearer was promoted from the *mušrif* of the stables to that of the *diwān-i-Hās*.’<sup>639</sup> Musta‘idd Hān’s emphasis on Aurangzīb’s promotion of social mobility, along with the fact that the notion of duty is a fundamental quality in a just Muslim, shows what the author expected the new ruler, his intended recipient, to defend.

This is followed by examples that show the ruler’s image as a soldier-emperor, a man who pays meticulous attention to the formations of his army and fearlessly approaches the front. The following sentence both demonstrates this element of Aurangzīb’s rulership and the fact that Musta‘idd Hān valued it highly, since it was placed at the conclusion of the forty-fifth chapter: ‘He (Aurangzīb) removed his camp from its former position to the plain half a kos from the fort in order to back the front division and expedite the work.’<sup>640</sup> No less than this, his religious practices are entirely influenced by the spirit of work and self-discipline: ‘The blessed month of Ramzan he spent in fasting (in the day time), and to the very end of that

<sup>635</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 217; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma‘āṣirī Ālamgiri*, 134.

<sup>636</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 455; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma‘āṣirī Ālamgiri*, 455.

<sup>637</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 170.

<sup>638</sup> Idem, 302; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma‘āṣirī Ālamgiri*, 184.

<sup>639</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 387; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma‘āṣirī Ālamgiri*, 236.

<sup>640</sup> Idem, 452.

month he used to remain busy up to midnight working.’<sup>641</sup> The religious experience or even religion itself are less important here than work and duty, which must be strictly fulfilled even in the holy month of Ramadan.

The author does not limit himself to discussing just one character in these terms: he also deals with groups of characters, foremost noblemen, who devote their lives to performance, duty, and work, just like the ideal sultan. While the analysis of these ‘minor characters’ might have little to do with the analysis of the protagonist at the first glance, Alex Woloch has recently shown that these two character groups are heavily intertwined and mutually dependent.<sup>642</sup> This means that, in our scenario, we need to have a quick look at the protagonist’s closest entourage in order to analyse to what extent they adapted Aurangzīb’s ideal as their own.

### AURANGZĪB’S ENTOURAGE - THE NEXT LEVEL OF NOBLE DISCIPLINE AND HONOUR

The main question which I seek to answer in the following excursus is to what extent the protagonist’s spartan lifestyle, his devotion to duty, and his will to expand the empire was accepted by his highest nobles, or whether they rejected his decision to govern the empire in a way that differed tremendously from his pomp-loving predecessors. Ferguson’s argument, which epitomises the classic narrative of a disciplined, enlightened, and active north-western Europeans in contrast to passive, decadent, and sensual Asian Muslims, led me to consider that Aurangzīb’s behaviour was not exceptional within the narrative, as Musta‘idd Ḥān portrayed his advisors and closest nobles as being equally disciplined and obsessed by obligation. Interestingly, Musta‘idd Ḥān uses the same setting, the funeral, to underline this pervading tone of austerity.

The work mania of Aurangzīb’s elites can be found in an obituary of an influential nobleman. This shows how the fulfilment of work and duty was a quality appreciated by all of the grievers collectively, since they all admire the deceased’s incredible industriousness and rue its loss:

News came to the Emperor from the subah of Ahmadabad that Shuja'et Ḥān Muḥammad Beg, the nazim, had died on the 16 June 1701. He was a wonderfully fortunate man, as he rose from a low position to the dignity of an Amir. He was an upright and efficient officer, an able general and administrator, never committing any blunder, and possessing many noble qualities. Arshad

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<sup>641</sup> Idem, 525-526.

<sup>642</sup> Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel*, Princeton 2003.

Ḥān, diwan of Khfda, died (...) The people of the subah acknowledge his miracle-working power and read the *Stiha* on his tomb.<sup>643</sup>

However, this workaholic was by no means an exception. Rather, Musta‘idd Ḥān presents other characters with similar qualities, such as a nobleman who is so impatient to start his work and fulfil his duties that he used to loudly declaim this wish upon entering a room:

Virtues and accomplishments were the upper garment of this expert one of our times. He used to say about himself, ‘The man is present. Where is the work?’ The Emperor said about him, ‘He used to discharge the duties of deputy Ḥān-i-saman in such a way as almost to illuminate my house.’<sup>644</sup>

Musta‘idd Ḥān could not have described the ideal subordinate and officer in a more significant fashion, since he underlines that this behaviour earned the man great favour with the ruler. Furthermore, the author’s use of light symbolism is crucial: only the pleasure of work enlightens the ruler’s house and makes it shine.

This notion of duty also emerges on the battlefield. A capitulation would be unthinkable for a member of the ruling family, regardless of how desperate the situation might be:

After this the Prince turned to the others; they all supported the Ḥān. The Prince then said, ‘You have spoken for yourselves. Now hear from me! Muḥammad ‘A‘ẓam with his two sons and Begam will not retreat from this dangerous place so long as he has life. After my death, His Majesty may come and order the removal of my corpse for funeral. My companions may stay or go away as they like. Then they all said in concert, ‘Our opinion is the same as our Highness’.<sup>645</sup>

The anecdote clearly shows the desire of the officers to pay any price for the advancement of the imperial cause. In this context, it is of great importance that the author showed that these expectations were by no means limited to Muslim nobles: it was also expected from Hindu noblemen, who could be sure of a reward if they could deliver convincing results. This is duly emphasised:

In this assault Raja Jai Singh and his men did splendid service. At the breaking down of this barrier the enemy lost their composure of mind, even though they were as numerous as (the

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<sup>643</sup> Idem, 441. The last phrase (‘The people of the subah acknowledge his miracle-working power and read the *Stiha* on his tomb’) has been taken from Sarkar’s comments on the manuscript, see idem, *Ma‘āsiri Ālamgiri*, 265.

<sup>644</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma‘āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*, 471; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma‘āsiri Ālamgiri*, 281.

<sup>645</sup> Idem, 264.

armies of) Gog and Magog. The Shahzada was rewarded with a jewelled sarpech, the Raja with the increment of 500 zat (2-hazar tr), and other heroes with promotion and favours.<sup>646</sup>

Once again, the notion of a Mughal meritocracy is apparent. As long as a person exerted and committed himself to the imperial idea, he could step further up the career ladder, regardless of whether he was a Hindu or Muslim. This is reflected in the following quote, which expressly indicates the rewards for successful work.

Muḥammad Amin Ḥān Bahadur, who had gone to patrol in the neighbourhood, did excellent work, and worked hard in the pursuit of the enemy, was summoned to Court after the enemy's escape.<sup>647</sup>

In contrast, the author disparagingly reports about those nobles who did not fulfil their duties in accordance with the ruler's expectations. Here, the brevity of the description and the emphasis placed on the shameless neglect of duties are of huge importance: 'The Qāzī died an embarrassing death.'<sup>648</sup>

Musta'idd Ḥān also places emphasis on those occasions when officers take part in the disciplining of nature. For instance, he highlights the happiness which fills the ruling house when the 'joyful news' that the streets had successfully been straightened reached the court: this construction project was of significant for the upcoming military operations. Here, the disciplining of nature through the efforts of efficient Mughal officers is highlighted as an indispensable part of the empire's expansion:

At last through the agency of Fathullah Ḥān Bahadur, came the joyful news of the roads being cleared and this distance of four kos which was extremely hard to pass, was traversed by the army with its abundant baggage with the greatest ease.<sup>649</sup>

The importance of disciplining nature is especially clear within the following report. Here, Musta'idd Ḥān again plays with the symbolism of a light-dark contrast: he describes the strongholds of the enemy as places that the sunlight never reaches. Light, order, discipline, and structure are only within the empire: descriptions like the following thus serve as yet another way to legitimatise that polity.

In all the paths of this hilly tract are impregnable forests and dense thorny jungle, at which even the sun dares not look (...) The Ḥān Bahadur was ordered to remove these difficulties and hindrances from the path. Under his supervision and efforts, sappers (men with spades and axes)

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<sup>646</sup> Idem, 456; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 272.

<sup>647</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āsiri-i Ālamgīrī*, 506, I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 300.

<sup>648</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āsiri-i Ālamgīrī*, 189.

<sup>649</sup> Idem, 448; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 267.



and stone-cutters in one week wonderfully accomplished the work. Hills were removed; ups and downs levelled, and trees cut down. Thus a level road was made broad enough for a hundred horsemen to march abreast easily.<sup>650</sup>

The Mughals' devotion to duty was without comparison, at least according to Musta'idd Hān. With this in mind, the author skilfully uses the description of the imperial troops and officers to offer legitimacy to the empire's further expansion and to distinguish it from Aurangzīb's lazy and decadent enemies, who, due to their passivity and backwardness, deserved nothing other than being subjected to the expanding Mughals.

The place was forty-five kos distant, and the path full of hilltops and passes so difficult and dangerous that travellers have not seen the like of them on earth. He made forced marches (...) suddenly came upon Sambha with the speed of lightning or the wind. The victorious Hān came out of the country (in safety) by prudent management [on the other side] (...) none of the infidel chiefs made any effort.<sup>651</sup>

It is thus evident how important the aspects of effort, discipline, punctuality, and speed in the context of military organisation must have been for Musta'idd Hān: he highlights the general's outstanding speed, whose troops could march as fast as the wind. On the other hand, as noted in the above quote's final sentence, the enemies did not try hard and thus deserved defeat. The significance of speed is repeatedly demonstrated: '(...) he very wisely marched away, rapidly covered sixty kos in two days, and joined the Emperor,'<sup>652</sup> and that there was a letter '(...) from Mughal Hān that stated that he attacked Bundi with a lightning speed.'<sup>653</sup>

The strict observance of punctuality also plays a role of considerable importance in the performance of non-military tasks: this is praised so long as the deadlines are met. Take, for example, the following excerpts: 'The work was done in (only) fifteen days'<sup>654</sup> and '(...) Abd al- Qādir (...) assured that he would complete (the work) in four months.'<sup>655</sup> Musta'idd Hān also strenuously emphasises that the Mughal officers did this work, since no one else could work at such impressive speed: 'In short, the Hān without heeding its strength, worked hard to run trenches and to mount guns on a hillock commanding the fort, doing the work of years in as many days.'<sup>656</sup>

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<sup>650</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āsiri-ī Ālamgīrī*, 448-449; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 267.

<sup>651</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āsiri-ī Ālamgīrī*, 321-322; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 194.

<sup>652</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āsiri-ī Ālamgīrī*, 199; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 123.

<sup>653</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āsiri-ī Ālamgīrī*, 234;

<sup>654</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āsiri-ī Ālamgīrī*, 408.

<sup>655</sup> Idem, 224.

<sup>656</sup> Idem, 425; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 257.

In some sections, Musta‘idd Hān inserted his intended recipient into the setting, who also successfully managed ‘forced marches’ against all odds.<sup>657</sup> When he arrived at the army camp, he was not expecting a pompous reception, but contented himself with a small tent. Discipline, modesty, and a spartan lifestyle are thus also ascribed to the new ruler. This interesting way of equating the recipient’s characteristics with those of his father allows the author to use the protagonist as a mirror for the new ruler, who is expected to act similarly in the future.

Prince Muḥammad ‘A‘zam Shah, who had been summoned to the Presence from the bank of the Nira, had arrived by forced marches, in spite of the excess of rains and abundance of mud, and that on account of the lack of porters he had brought only a small tent.<sup>658</sup>

The quotations used in this excursus show the protagonist’s austere lifestyle and the disciplined entourage which was willing to follow their ambitious leader. By combining crucial aspects like their devotion to duty, self-sacrifice for the empire, and the general importance of punctuality and speed, the specifically Mughal concept of a pre-modern meritocracy becomes visible, an issue which must have been extremely important for Musta‘idd Hān. I argue that he wanted to show this particular aspect to his intended recipient, as he underlined it with yet another attribute of his protagonist; namely, his sometimes surprisingly unorthodox behaviour and the ‘wise’ alliance with the Hindus.<sup>659</sup>

#### ON THE PROTAGONIST’S ‘WISE’ ALLIANCE WITH THE HINDUS AND HIS UNORTHODOX ACTIONS - ON AURANGZĪB’S *REALPOLITIK*

Here, we will present a discussion of two other important aspects of the text which contradict the assumption that our author primarily wanted to portray an ultra-orthodox ruler and a violent enemy of the Hindus as the ideal Muslim king. These are citations in which the author expressly points out how eager Aurangzīb was to cooperate with the loyal Hindus and which illuminate his surprisingly unorthodox actions. These passages no doubt can easily be skipped in a quick reading, especially in Sarkar’s translation. This is not only because these are very concise descriptions, but also because they are distributed throughout the entire text, which makes it difficult to find a common thread between them. However, they nevertheless constitute a significant part of the author’s narrative strategy and therefore deserve our attention.

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<sup>657</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 230.

<sup>658</sup> Idem, 230; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 142.

<sup>659</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 10.

In the second part, I will additionally discuss numerous examples in the text which relate to the beautiful music at the court. Although we will analyse this delicate topic in more detail in chapter 5, some of these snippets must be mentioned in the present section, as they contribute significantly to an alternative interpretation of the protagonist's characterisation. The author spread the strikingly unorthodox traits of his protagonist continuously throughout the text: all of these have a decisive impact on his design of Aurangzīb's character. Of course, nothing was better suited for this than the ruler's dialogue with the Hindus, which the author stresses at the beginning of his text. It is necessary to look at this delicate issue of Aurangzīb's *Realpolitik*, which Musta'idd Ḥān calls a 'wise'<sup>660</sup> alliance with the Hindus. Aurangzīb's tendency towards a pragmatic *Realpolitik* has been mentioned several times in the research, but unfortunately has not inspired deeper study.

If we consider the cautious attempts of the author to present this no doubt questionable concept of a *Realpolitik*, it becomes clear that he wanted to show this specific tendency in his text right from the beginning, in the midst of the chaos of a fratricidal war. As soon as Aurangzīb proclaimed himself himself as Šāh Ġāhān's legitimate successor in the first official coronation in July 1658, he received the support of those major Hindu generals who had previously given oaths to his father. If we once again remember the fact that the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* serves as one of the main textual proofs of Muslim fanaticism in India, then the following point is of great significance. Musta'idd Ḥān explicitly declares that this 'wise'<sup>661</sup> alliance of Aurangzīb with the Hindu nobles meant the beginning of the end for Dārā. When enemies once again planned to attack from the river,<sup>662</sup> Aurangzīb decides to send the experienced Hindu general Rājā Jai Singh against Dārā: '(...)the Emperor wisely ordered Rājā Jai Singh and a few other leaders to join the first detachment.'<sup>663</sup> After Dārā realised that Aurangzīb trusted numerous Hindus enough to assign them such an important task, he finally had to realise his hopeless situation: 'Dārā, learning of it (Aurangzīb's wise alliance with the Hindus), realized that he could not resist (...)'.<sup>664</sup>

This is not just proof of confidence of the highest order in the Hindu nobles, as there was still a risk that Rājā Jai Singh could desert to his old patron, Dārā: Musta'idd Ḥān's evaluation of Aurangzīb's decision is also of considerable importance. By indicating that this was a *wise* decision, Musta'idd Ḥān takes a position on his ruler's vote of confidence for the Hindus.

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<sup>660</sup> Ibid.

<sup>661</sup> Ibid.

<sup>662</sup> Ibid.

<sup>663</sup> Ibid.

<sup>664</sup> Ibid.

Moreover, in the same paragraph, Aurangzīb decides to forgive one of his greatest adversaries, Maharājā Jaswant Singh (who later became a traitor at the Battle of H̥jawa), for his initial alliance with Dārā, and orders him back into royal service.<sup>665</sup>

In the next chapter, we will fully discuss how Musta‘idd H̥n constantly placed at least one relativising anecdote around events for which the protagonist might later be criticised. For the time being, however, the present section primarily intends to highlight specific characterisations: their effect on the narrative technique will be analysed in the coming chapter. So, without further ado, let us have a closer look at another theme where we find surprising descriptions of the protagonist: Musta‘idd H̥n’s attempt to describe Aurangzīb as a promoter of music.

### SWEET AND JOYOUS MUSIC AT AURANGZĪB’S COURT

As the previous section pointed out, Musta‘idd H̥n sought to stylise his protagonist as an austere ruler and soldier-king; thus, it would be logical to conclude that music is only mentioned within military or political contexts, where its performance would have some kind of practical use. However, this is not the case: the author repeatedly stresses that there was ‘sweet music’ at court.<sup>666</sup> Music indeed plays an important role in festivities and royal pleasure.<sup>667</sup> Again and again, Musta‘idd H̥n talks about ‘joyous music’,<sup>668</sup> ‘music of delighting’,<sup>669</sup> ‘cheerful strains’,<sup>670</sup> and ‘heartwarming notes’,<sup>671</sup> and continuously highlights how generously his protagonist treated artists in public.<sup>672</sup> This is of great importance, as Aurangzīb’s alleged ban of music has been used subsequently to depict him as a bigoted philistine with no interest in art outside calligraphy and public singing of the *Qur’ān*.<sup>673</sup>

It is true that the text does not always directly point out that the music was played on the direct order of the ruler or that he actually was pleased by it. Instead, the quotes above prove how much Musta‘idd H̥n was keen to show, albeit in a prudent manner, that his former patron did not order an absolute ban on music, as is so often argued. Rather, our author’s protagonist was able to clearly distinguish between his own needs and those of others. While

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<sup>665</sup> Ibid.

<sup>666</sup> Idem, 236, 237.

<sup>667</sup> Idem, 275, 299, 321.

<sup>668</sup> Idem, 30, 54, 280, 236, 267.

<sup>669</sup> Idem, 208.

<sup>670</sup> Idem, 81.

<sup>671</sup> Idem, 316.

<sup>672</sup> Idem, 24, 71, 109, 526-527.

<sup>673</sup> I will present a detailed discussion of the respective secondary literature in chapter 5.

he personally had no joy in music in his old age, he was able to understand and accept the general needs of his subjects and the highly sophisticated noble etiquette surrounding musical performance. This distinction is made clear within the last direct speech of the protagonist, which is uttered shortly before he lay down on his deathbed. When an influential nobleman asks the protagonist how he thinks about music, the author lets Aurangzīb respond very cautiously and with a surprisingly reflective tone. Again, it is striking that Aurangzīb's last direct speech before succumbing to illness lacks any aggressive and religiously-charged vocabulary, which one would expect had it been the author's intent to depict Aurangzīb as a religious fanatic: this would have been the perfect moment at which to encapsulate his allegedly anti-Hindu stance. However, the author only reports on the delicate matter of the playing and joy of music.

Those of the court chanters, singers and musicians who repented of their sinful art, he made happy by the grant of daily stipends and land as 'aid to living'. Mirza Mukarram Hān Safavi, who was an expert in the musical art, once said to His Majesty 'What is Your Majesty's view of music?' The Emperor answered (in Arabic) 'It is *mubah*, neither good nor bad'. The Hān asked, 'Then what kind of it is in your opinion most worthy to be heard?' The Emperor replied, 'I cannot listen to music without flutes, (be-m'zāmir) especially pakhdwaj, but that is unanimously prohibited (haram), so I have left off hearing singing too.'<sup>674</sup>

Again, this quote should not be underestimated in terms of its importance for the author's narrative strategy. It is absolutely crucial that the protagonist's last direct speech before the often-quoted religious sayings on his deathbed (which still do not contain any hatred against non-Muslims) is dedicated to music, which is actually described in quite a positive way. The fact that Musta'idd Hān placed the topic of music at such an important position within the text and that he described the ruler's decision explicitly as a private one rather than a general ban demonstrate the rectitude of Satish Chandra's convincing conclusions on this matter:

Aurangzīb took a number of measures which have been called puritanical, but many of which were really of an economic and social character, and against superstitious beliefs. Thus, he forbade singing in the court and the official musicians were pensioned off. Instrumental music and naubat (the royal band) were, however, continued. It is of some interest to note (...) that the largest number of Persian works on classical Indian music were written in Aurangzīb's reign and that Aurangzīb himself was proficient in playing the veena. Thus the jibe of Aurangzīb to

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<sup>674</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āziri-Ālamgīrī*, 527; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āziri Ālamgīrī*, 313.

the protesting musicians that they should bury the bier of music they were carrying deep under the earth so that ‘that no echo of it may rise again’ was only an angry remark.<sup>675</sup>

It is thus clear that the author did not intend to describe Aurangzīb as nothing more than a self-disciplined and self-denying ruler; while the text’s recipient would certainly have responded to such a portrait with respect and reverence, it would have been very difficult for him to feel sympathy for the protagonist’s actions. Although Aurangzīb had left his son with incredible wealth and had managed to win the largest expansion of the empire through continuous struggle, he also left behind many unanswered crises and conflicts that broke out after his death. Thus, if the author had created an image of a cold protagonist whose discipline and soldierly life were indeed major reasons for the conflicts in the empire that his son inherited, the recipient would not have been able to show any indulgence towards his father’s actions. Musta‘idd Ḥān therefore cleverly extends his narrative strategy by designing Aurangzīb, albeit cautious and indirectly, as a partly unorthodox ruler who sought an alliance with loyal Hindus and who had no problems with the fact that his subjects continued to enjoy music, even if he personally showed no interest in it and even regarded it as being somewhat un-Islamic. By doing so, Musta‘idd Ḥān continued to draw parallels between his protagonist’s characteristics and those of the recipient. The author thus evidently expected the latter to continue the tolerant tendencies of his father and to perhaps even intensify the promotion of arts. It is highly significant that Mu‘azzam Shah is the only prince who is ever mentioned in direct connection with music in the entire text: ‘(...) the Prince who was staying at the river that flows at the foot of the fort in order to support this corps, now reached the entrenchment and struck up the music of victory.’<sup>676</sup>

The alliance with the Hindus and Aurangzīb’s ability to pragmatically turn a blind eye to issues like music are important pillars within Musta‘idd Ḥān’s characterisation of the protagonist. These strategies were further extended by the description of Aurangzīb as beneficent, as we will see in the next section. While the manifestation of a sovereign’s generosity is hardly surprising within a pre-modern chronicle, I would argue that even behind these less-than-spectacular passages one can find another deeper way to interpret the text’s second layer. This is because it is here that our author emphasises that Mughal cultural curiosity certainly did not come to an end under his protagonist’s rule.

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<sup>675</sup> Véronique Bénéï (ed.), *Manufacturing Citizenship. Education and Nationalism in Europe, South Asia and China*, London, 2009, 151.

<sup>676</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma‘āzīr-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 300.

## ON THE PROTAGONIST'S MAGNAMITY AND THE NARRATIVE FUNCTION OF ANNUAL GIFT-GIVING

### PRELUDE

Upon reading the *Ma'āsiri-i 'Ālamgīrī*, it is noteworthy that Musta'idd Hān puts a significant degree of emphasis on gifts.<sup>677</sup> While some of these descriptions only last a sentence, others take more than half of a page to list all of the presents of the envoys of other Muslim empires and of the princesses and nobles in the service of Aurangzīb's court. Unlike any other parts of the text, these precise descriptions of the annual ceremony of gift giving are extremely monotonous. This was constantly criticised by the two recent detailed analyses of the text. Sarkar noted in his introduction that 'consequently in many places it reads like a dry list of official postings and promotions as in our Government Gazettes'.<sup>678</sup> Sajida Alvi remarked that, in sections like these, Musta'idd Hān forgot his duty as a chronicler, which was to pay 'attention to historically crucial events'.<sup>679</sup> However, rather than condemning these parts of the text from the outset as unhistorical and dry, I would suggest a different reading of the annual gift-giving ceremonies in order to demonstrate that they conceal a crucial element of the author's narrative strategy.

It was the French sociologist Marcel Mauss who presented the first comprehensive study of the exchange of gifts in 1923-24.<sup>680</sup> His comparative study of exchange relationships in very different cultures yielded a theoretical framework: the *system of total services*. This is based on three obligations: giving, taking, and replying. Mauss described these services as parts of one whole, as all aspects of social practice and all social groups are associated with them; thus, all of society is represented and reproduced in the gift itself. The work of Mauss inspired other scientific disciplines to intensify research on gift exchange. The exchange of gifts can contribute to a social group in a peaceful way by initiating relationships while simultaneously amplifying them. On the other hand, a present can create negative consequences if the gift generates dependency and corrupts the receiver. Sharing can thus sow discord between the exchange partners, especially when they clash over the obligations which derive from a gift being returned too late or being of too little value.<sup>681</sup> Let us now have a look at the entire text

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<sup>677</sup> Throughout the entire text and its 51 chapters, I have counted around 340 sections that mention the noun 'gift'.

<sup>678</sup> Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, vi.

<sup>679</sup> Sajida Alvi, *The Historians of Aurangzeb*, 69-70.

<sup>680</sup> Marcel Mauss, 'Essai sur le don', in *L'Année sociologique* 1, 1923-1924, 30-186.

<sup>681</sup> Gadi Algazi, *Negotiating the Gift. Pre-Modern Figurations of Exchange*, Göttingen, 2003; Helmuth Berking, *Schenken. Zur Anthropologie des Gebens*. Frankfurt/Main, 1996; Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*, Madison, 2000; Gert Dressel and Gudrun Hopf (eds.), *Von Geschenken und anderen Gaben*.

to find out why the annual gift-giving ceremonies play such an important role within the author's narrative strategy.

## ANALYSIS

The emphasis on gifts in the text has obvious roots: Musta'idd Ḥān had been working as the guardian of the royal gifts before starting his work on the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*. This means that our author directly observed the constant gift giving at the royal court: we may therefore accord some credibility to these reports. Thus, Musta'idd Ḥān's former office certainly might have been a major reason why the presents occupy such an extraordinarily significant place within the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*. However, there is a further, very important reason to analyse this annual procedure: its function within the author's narrative strategy.

Within the first few pages, which deal with the war of succession, ceremonial gifts occupy a crucial space. After the victorious battle against Dārā at Samurgah in May 1658, Aurangzīb received the sword *'Ālamgīr* from his father Šāh Ġāhān. The immediate consequence is that several important nobles now turned to Aurangzīb to offer him their services. Aurangzīb responds in his first coronation with such an excessive distribution of gifts that they could not be enumerated: 'The presents for the Princes, the high nobles, the manṣab-dārs and other officers, cannot be counted.'<sup>682</sup> The mention of gifts here fulfils an important function in Auranzeb's political staging and constructing the legitimacy of his government.<sup>683</sup> This is also the case in the middle of his fourth year of rule (1661-1662). One could almost say that the description of this year is almost entirely occupied by gift giving. Aurangzīb rewarded the nobles of his court: 'The Princes, nobles, Rājās, Amir, all received rewards and gifts beyond

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*Annäherungen an eine historische Anthropologie des Lebens*, Frankfurt/Main, 2000; also Valentin Groebener, *Gefährliche Geschenke. Ritual, Politik und die Sprache der Korruption in der Eidgenossenschaft im späten Mittelalter und am Beginn der Neuzeit*, Konstanz, 2000.

<sup>682</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 10.

<sup>683</sup> Regarding the complex issue of the Mughals' legitimisation of rule, see firstly Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam*. Alam argues that the two main pillars of Mughal legitimisation were bureaucratic political authority and the religious legitimisation of state power: Mughal rulers always had to balance these two spheres of power. A historical overview is given by Akhil Gupta and Kalyanakrishnan Sivaramakrishnan (eds.), *The State in India after Liberalization. Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, New York, 2011, 1-29 and Anthony Reid, 'Introduction. Muslims and Power in a Plural Asia' in Anthony Reid and Michael Gilsenan (eds.), *Islamic Legitimacy in a Plural Asia*, Abingdon, 2007, 1-14. See also Harbans Mukhia, *The Mughals of India*, Malden, MA, 2004; also Alam, *Writing the Mughal Word*, chapter 3, 123-164; Corinne Lefèvre, 'Pouvoir et noblesse dans l'Empire moghol. Perspectives du règne de Jahāngīr (1605-1627)' in *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, vol. 62, no. 6, 2007, 1287-1312; recently: Ian Copland, et al. (eds.) *A History of State and Religion in India*, New York, 2012; Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign. Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam*, New York, 2012. In regard to Aurangzīb, see 211-240.



their desire (...).<sup>684</sup> He himself was also blessed with numerous extraordinary gifts like Georgian slaves, which I will discuss below.<sup>685</sup>

The fact that the acceptance of gifts by nobles placed them lower in the social hierarchy means that these ceremonies must be regarded as important symbolic acts that served Aurangzīb's presentation of his power, the legitimisation of his rule, and the delegation of tasks and authority to other Muslim kingdoms and members of his own family.<sup>686</sup> This is very clear in relation to Šīvā, who, despite all his offenses against Aurangzīb, receives an audience with the protagonist. On that occasion, Musta'idd Ḥān explicitly states that Šīvā's gifts are those of a subaltern. His giving is described as *naẓr*, 'a present or offering from an inferior to a superior.'<sup>687</sup> Thus, it is clear that gift giving contributes considerably to the narrative strategy of the author within the text's first half by strengthening the pathos of distance between Aurangzīb and the other characters. This function is particularly obvious at the beginning of the same chapter, where masses of gifts are mentioned: the list suddenly stops when Musta'idd Ḥān mentions that Šāh Ġāhān intended to contribute something to this impressive itinerary. Indeed, there is something tragic in the contemptuous way that Musta'idd Ḥān describes these particular items. The former ruler of the Mughal Empire and builder of the *Tāğ Maḥal*, who was now in exile in Agra to look over his architectural *oeuvre* and the resting place of his beloved wife, was only able to contribute some '(...) some jewels and jewelled textiles (sent by Šāh Ġāhān)'.<sup>688</sup>

The reasons why Musta'idd Ḥān designed the narration of the fourth year in this specific way are thus evident. At the beginning of the chapter, Aurangzīb's presents are described as being innumerable, highly interesting, and exceptional; however, when the author turns to the gifts of Šāh Ġāhān, the text takes on a bored and condescending tone. The author is making the point that Šāh Ġāhān's power, symbolised by these ridiculous gifts, has definitely come to an end. Firstly, the text's recipient is left ignorant as to whether Aurangzīb actually accepted his father's gifts, something which is usually mentioned as a crucial gesture and proof of the gift's value. Secondly, in the very next sentence, it is mentioned that Aurangzīb was also in the position to donate an annual pension of 50,000 rupees to the family of the recently

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<sup>684</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 35.

<sup>685</sup> Idem, 36; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 22.

<sup>686</sup> E.g. Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 41.

<sup>687</sup> Francis Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary, including the Arabic Words and Phrases to be met within Persian Literature*, London, 1892, 1394.

<sup>688</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 38.

deceased *Ḥalīl Allāh Ḥān*, Subahdar of Lahore.<sup>689</sup> Thirdly, and only a little later in June 1663, Aurangzīb decided to increase poor relief considerably: the author expressly notes that it was much less under *Šāh Ḡāhān*.<sup>690</sup> Here, the gift serves as an important symbol of power which Aurangzīb uses to depose and surpass his father, and thus legitimise his own rule. The fact that Aurangzīb has more assets than his predecessor and is able to spend so much on almshouses demonstrates that his rule is truly based on solid foundations. His predecessor deserved to be replaced, as he could not keep up financially with his son.

It is now evident that *Musta‘idd Ḥān* did not just arrange his chronicle according to events like battles, coronation festivities, and weddings. In the fourth chapter, he finally proved that *Šāh Ḡāhān*’s government was at the end and gave Aurangzīb’s rebellion some decisive legitimisation. This textual degradation of the once powerful *Šāh Ḡāhān* shows that gift giving, which was previously labelled as completely unimportant, in fact plays a crucial role as a narrative tool.

The annual detailed lists of gifts are closely related to another important aspect which plays a prominent part in every year of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*: the promotion of deserving noblemen. This not only serves as another block with which to build the emperor’s legitimacy, but also characterises the overall tone of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. It is here where *Musta‘idd Ḥān* praises the characters for their exceptional achievements, such as the construction of a bridge in a few days,<sup>691</sup> hard and long marches in the enemy’s territory when the army has lost a lot of horses,<sup>692</sup> conquering fortresses,<sup>693</sup> and arresting disloyal nobleman.<sup>694</sup> As mentioned before, the emphasis on the characters’ fulfilment of obligations is not limited to Muslim nobles: *Musta‘idd Ḥān* seeks to demonstrate explicitly that this was also the case with Hindu aristocrats. This proves to the text’s recipient that Aurangzīb did not have an ultra-orthodox religious policy; instead, he attempted to assist high Hindu nobles to identify with the Mughal system of government and to promote them accordingly. For example, *Rājā Jai Singh* was promoted and rewarded not only for acting successfully against the renegade *Šīvā* in September 1664, but also for later mediating between the two parties: ‘*Rājā Jai Singh* was made a seven Hazari (...) in recognition of his excellent services.’<sup>695</sup> The gifts

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<sup>689</sup> Ibid.

<sup>690</sup> Ibid.

<sup>691</sup> Idem, 18.

<sup>692</sup> Idem, 27.

<sup>693</sup> Idem, 34.

<sup>694</sup> Idem, 27.

<sup>695</sup> Idem, 51; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma‘āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*, 33.

symbolically link the observance of discipline and rewards, whilst their withdrawal signifies punishment if duty was disregarded.

Promotion and gifting are connected with another key aspect of Aurangzīb's legitimisation of his rule: his constant pardoning of former rebels. As we have seen, Musta'idd Ḥān presents Aurangzīb as the victim of several external conflicts and as someone who is betrayed by even his closest family members. It is thus striking how the author highlights the protagonist's will to forgive anyone at any time.<sup>696</sup> Whether this was really the case is an entirely different question, but, in regard to the textual legitimisation of rule, it is truly important, especially since the emperor's clemency is directed towards both Muslims and Hindus. For example, after Šivā managed to withstand the imperial forces led by the Hindu noble Jaswanth Singh, the Hindu general Rājā Jai Singh managed to obtain success against Šivā. At this point, Šivā recognises his hopeless situation and pleads for mercy. This was immediately given: 'In the terms of the Rājā's request, a farman was sent to Šivā containing pardon and a gracious robe from the Emperor.'<sup>697</sup> Additionally, the insurgent's son is promoted: '(Šivā's) son Sambha was made a five Hazari.'<sup>698</sup> Aurangzīb's readiness to forgive is not limited to human beings, as he even redeems captive animals from their fate.<sup>699</sup>

While it is hardly unprecedented for an early modern chronicle to portray a ruler as forgiving, these instances of clemency are highly important when we remember that the *Ma'āsiri-ī Ālamgīrī* is principally cited as proof that there was an orthodox and fundamentalist Muslim government in seventeenth-century India. Musta'idd Ḥān was eager to point out that his protagonist directly intervened when he felt that even his highest nobles might have committed injustice against his (Hindu) subjects: 'Makarand Singh, son of Pratab Singh, zamindar of Kalibhit, was imprisoned by Ḥān Jahan Bahadur for non-payment of money dues. By order he was sent to Court. He was only seven years old (and later) he was released from prison and permitted to return home.'<sup>700</sup> Here, Musta'idd Ḥān underlined the fact that the princes picked up this tradition of forgiveness towards formerly rebellious Hindus, referring to the protagonist as a model: '(...) The Prince pitied him [=the Rānā] and reported his

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<sup>696</sup> Good examples of publicly pardoning former rebels and its importance for the author's narrative strategy are Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āsiri-ī Ālamgīrī*, 19, 28, 62, 111, 349, 412.

<sup>697</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āsiri-ī Ālamgīrī*, 51, I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 33.

<sup>698</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>699</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āsiri-ī Ālamgīrī*, 39.

<sup>700</sup> *Idem*, 218.

requests to His Majesty, who overlooked the Rānā's offences and resolved to gratify the Prince by acceding to his proposal.<sup>701</sup>

Additionally, the protagonist showed particular clemency towards women. When Musta'idd Ḥān writes about the failed rebellion of Aurangzīb's son Akbar in 1681, he notes that Aurangzīb put all of the principal male conspirators to death, but spared Zīb an-Nisā' (1638-1702), although her private letters undoubtedly proved her direct involvement into the rebellion.<sup>702</sup> Moreover, the protagonist was still willing to forgive Akbar if he only returned to his kingdom after his flight to the Safavids. According to the author:

Two servants of Muḥammad Akbar from Qandahar brought to the Court a letter begging forgiveness and a casket of *Aṭṭār* (perfumes). A robe and a farman, - stating that so long as he did not come within the frontiers of India he would not be pardoned, but that on his entering the imperial dominions a gracious order appointing him Subahdar of Bengal and conferring other favours would be issued to him, - were sent to Akbar with these men.<sup>703</sup>

In this context, it is interesting that we find two sections within the text which emphasise the importance of clemency. Firstly, Aurangzīb rejoiced when, at an appropriate moment, a servant quoted some verses from a poem which reminded the ruler to let grace prevail: the ruler thus forgave the sinner.

On the day of interview, when he arrived at the place of making salam, Multafat Ḥān who was standing close to the throne by virtue of his office of darogha of the khawases, recited in a low tone: 'Forgiveness has a sweetness which vengeance lacks. The kind Emperor said: 'You have recited it at the right time. Looking kindly at the chief of ministers he ordered him to kiss his toes, and raised his head from the dust of distress.'<sup>704</sup>

However, there was no need to constantly remind the protagonist of such virtues, since Aurangzīb forgave a Sikh deserter publicly without such a hint. Here, again, we realise the importance of the direct speech (*focalisation*) for Musta'idd Ḥān's narrative technique, which clearly expresses the author's intention to portray his protagonist in this particular way. After he had blessed the penitent man seeking forgiveness, Aurangzīb said to him the following verses: 'My court is not a court of misery; even if you have broken your penance a hundred times, you can come again (to me).'<sup>705</sup>

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<sup>701</sup> Idem, 208.

<sup>702</sup> Idem, 204.

<sup>703</sup> Idem, 412; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 250.

<sup>704</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āsiri-i Ālamgiri*, 364-365; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 220.

<sup>705</sup> Idem, 393.

Both quotes demonstrate the importance of poetry in terms of Musta‘idd Hān’s narrative strategy and the text’s function as a mirror for the new ruler: the author was telling the latter that he should also seek calm and level-headed nobles who would opt for clemency in cases of doubt as his future advisors.

The grace and tolerance shown to non-Muslim subjects in the act of gift giving serves us as an introduction to the last function of the gift. Here, I want to show that Musta‘idd Hān additionally aimed to emphasise his own cultural curiosity and that of Aurangzīb’s court through the description of certain gifts. Some sections explicitly report on exotic and unusual gifts, focusing in detail on their outstanding exceptionality and heritage:

One dagger, one jewelled jigha, one hundred and nine Arab, Persian and Turki horses, some of which had jewelled and gold trappings, two elephants, some gold and silver vessels, a certain number of suits of dress, nice robes, tents, pavilions, precious carpets, and all other articles of splendour (...).<sup>706</sup>

Or: ‘In return for the friendly presents of these kings, rare objects and woven stuffs of Hindustan and jewels and precious and substantial articles were sent to them.’<sup>707</sup>

However, this is not the only section within the text that stands out in terms of its detail, which clearly shows us how much our author, due to his work experience, was interested in gifts. He additionally tried to demonstrate elsewhere the importance of gifts in order to better underline the cultural curiosity that, under Aurangzīb’s reign, encompassed far more than merely Mughal horizons. This was how Musta‘idd Hān indicated that the Mughal Empire under the protagonist’s rule was not a fundamentalist kingdom passively waiting and watching early modern globalisation from the outside. Rather, the opposite was the case, as I will show in the coming short excursus about Georgians in the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. Although Musta‘idd Hān’s references to the presence of Georgians at Aurangzīb’s court are extremely scarce, they have a deeper meaning when we subject them to a searching analysis.

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<sup>706</sup> Idem, 63; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 42.

<sup>707</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 337; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 203.

## EXCURSUS: ON GEORGIANS IN THE *MA'ĀSİR-I 'ĀLAMGĪRĪ* AND THE AUTHOR'S CULTURAL CURIOSITY

In the spring of 1661, Qasim Aqa Rumi presented the emperor with an extraordinary present. Whereas many of the presents which Musta'idd Hān constantly mentions are often standard ones, such as jewels, elephants, and daggers, the following is truly an exception, as '(...) Georgian slaves (...)’ appear only once throughout the entire text as a present.<sup>708</sup>

In sections like this, Mieke Bal's notion of close reading as a specific tool for contemporary cultural analysis comes into play.<sup>709</sup> Since previous research has labelled the *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī* as monotonous and of lower quality, specifically in comparison to other texts of the same genre, I argue that these short passages and ‘fragile threats’<sup>710</sup> enable us to discover the text's second layer, where the author sought to present a ruler who maintained many of the traditions of his predecessors, such as a cultural curiosity that extended far beyond the Mughal world; thus, it was not his intention to portray the ruler, his entourage, and their epoch as xenophobic or as stubbornly ultra-orthodox.

While this section is necessarily brief, we nevertheless have to put it into a larger context, as these short and inconspicuous examples truly characterise the *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī*. Here, the concept of ‘connected history’ is especially fruitful. However, researchers have long overlooked the present source and Aurangzīb's time as material for a connected history, simply because the text has been characterised as the product of ultra-conservative Muslim author who endorsed a fundamentalist way of government. The *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī* was not worthy of the same attention as the texts of Aurangzīb's prominent predecessors, such as the *Bābur-nāma*, the *Akbar-nāma*, or the *Tuzuk-i Ġahāngīrī*. However, it must be noted that Musta'idd Hān explicitly highlights Georgian slaves and their extraordinary status in order to underline that nothing has changed regarding the Mughal elite's interest in the world beyond India in the second half of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries. Let us now briefly clarify the specific status of Georgians within pre-modern Islamic societies and try to explain why Musta'idd Hān underlines their presence at the protagonist's court.

Georgians had occupied a prominent place at royal Islamic courts since the Middle Ages. It was above all their discipline and strength in combat that prompted many Muslim rulers, especially the Mamluks of Egypt, to use Georgian fighters as their elite troops and palace guards: ‘The second period of the *Mamlūk* Sultanate in Egypt and Syria (1382-1517) was

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<sup>708</sup> Idem, 35-36.

<sup>709</sup> See Mieke Bal, *Close Reading Today*.

<sup>710</sup> Subrahmanyam, *Connected Histories*.

called by contemporary historians the “regime of the Circassians” (Ar. *dawlat al-jarākisa*) (...) Adolescents brought from the Circassian region (*bilād al-jarkas*) of the Caucasus for training as cadets for military service (...).<sup>711</sup> From the second half of the sixteenth century, the Safavids (1501-1736) imported large numbers of Georgians into Iran, where they were converted to Islam and placed into high positions in the army and administration.<sup>712</sup>

However, Georgia not only served as a reservoir of human resources: Islamic rulers also entered into constant alliances with their Christian Georgian neighbours to fight against their various enemies.<sup>713</sup> Interestingly, these delicate alliances with Georgia were not limited to adjacent Muslim empires (the realms of the Ottomans, the Uzbeks, and the Iranian Safawiya), as one might think. Indo-Persian chronicles also mention in many places the interest of the Mughals in the Georgians, calling them *Gurjis*. We read, for example, in ‘Abū ‘l-Faẓl ‘Allāmī’s *Akbar-nāma* that the Iranian ruler Šāh Abbās (died 1629) copied the practice of the author’s sovereign, Akbar, in supporting those Georgians in rebellion.<sup>714</sup>

We can be quite sure that the Mughal elite were very well informed about the Iranian-Ottoman struggle within the Caucasus during Aurangzīb’s rule, making it part of the knowledge that the author would have assimilated from his *Sitz im Leben*.<sup>715</sup> This information was mainly relayed through the mass of ambassadors, travellers, and petitioners who constantly informed the royal court about geopolitical events.<sup>716</sup> It would have also come from

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<sup>711</sup> Carl Petry, ‘Circassians, Mamlūk’ in Kate Fleet, et. al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Third Edition*, Brill Online, 2012, [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/circassians-mamluk-COM\\_24404](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/circassians-mamluk-COM_24404), last accessed 17/10/2012; see also the standard works of Ulrich Haarmann, ‘Der arabische Osten im späten Mittelalter 1250-1517’ in Ulrich Haarmann (ed.), *Geschichte der arabischen Welt*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., Munich, 2004, 217-263, 606-612, 640-647; idem, ‘Miṣr, 5. The Mamlūk Period (1250-1517)’ in Peri Bearman, et al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Brill Online, 2012, [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/misr-COM\\_0755](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/misr-COM_0755), last accessed 16/2/2012. For an interrogation of the pre-modern global cultural and economic exchange, the classic references are Janet Abū Lughod, *Before European Hegemony. The World System 1250-1350*, New York, 1989 and Stephen Humphreys, ‘Egypt in the World System of the Later Middle Ages’ in Stephen Humphreys (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Egypt, vol. 1: Islamic Egypt, 640-1517*, Cambridge, 1998, 445-461.

<sup>712</sup> See Raoul Motika, *Caucasia between the Ottoman empire and Iran, 1555 - 1914*, Wiesbaden, 2000; also Giorgio Rota, *La Vita e i Tempi di Rostam Ḥān*, Wien 2009.

<sup>713</sup> Grigol Beradze and Karlo Kutsia, ‘Towards the Interrelations of Iran and Georgia in the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries’ in Raoul Motika and Michael Ursinus (eds.), *Caucasia between the Ottoman Empire and Iran*, Wiesbaden, 2000, 121-132.

<sup>714</sup> See Carl Kortepeter, ‘Complex Goals of the Ottomans, Persians and Muscovites in the Caucasus’ in Colin Mitchell (ed.), *New Perspectives on Safavid Iran. Empire and Society*, London, 2011, 59-83.

<sup>715</sup> To what extent the Mughal elite had access to events beyond India is discussed by Sanjay Subrahmanyam in *Explorations in Connected History. Mughals and Franks*, 8 ff. Subrahmanyam refers to the works of Muḥammad Sabzawāri Ṭāhir, who was fully informed of the disastrous enterprise of the Portuguese King San Sebastião in North Africa and Šādiq Iṣfahānī’s *World Atlas* from 1640.

<sup>716</sup> Šāh Ḡāhān, for example, learned in detail about the troubles of his contemporary Charles II of England (at this time exiled in Holland, 1651-60): the English monarch addressed a letter directly to him, seeking financial assistance to regain power. See Jorge Flores, ‘I Will Do as My Father Did’, 15-16.

Iranian scholars, who migrated in large numbers to India between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries hoping to find a patron for their work,<sup>717</sup> and through Georgians themselves. For the latter, as with many other non-Muslims, the Mughal Empire was a potential springboard for their own careers: ‘Converts or not, Georgians had very deep connections with the royal hunting traditions of Iran, and some, we know, moved even further east, ending up in Siam.’<sup>718</sup> In sixteenth-century Gujarat, for example, we meet people such as the former Georgian slave Malik Ayāz, who, after receiving patronage from Maḥmūd Bigarh (the Sultan of Gujarat, gov. 1458-1511), started his own career as a hunter and finally ended up as the governor of Diu. During Aurangzīb’s reign, the Georgian convert Ibrāhīm Malik was, in the words of the Italian traveller and writer Niccolao Manucci (1639-1717), ‘(...) in charge of the hawks, falcons, and the royal hunting establishment.’<sup>719</sup>

Georgians were not only popular because of their strength and discipline in military and administrative issues. Georgian women were also well known for their beauty, which enraptured Muslim and European travellers alike. We learn about the comeliness of Georgian slaves at Muslim courts from the enigmatic figure of John Chardin (died 1713), a contemporary of our protagonist Aurangzib who fled Paris because of religious persecution and travelled to India and Persia at the end of the 1660s: ‘The complexion of the Georgians is most beautiful; you can scarce see an ill-favoured person among them; and the women are so exquisitely handsome that it is hardly possible to look upon them and not be in love with them.’<sup>720</sup> The author’s distinctive positioning of the Georgians in the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* could also be explained through the fact that Aurangzīb’s favourite wife Udaipūrī Maḥal (died 1707) was a Georgian slave girl who had belonged to the harem of his brother and former rival Dārā.<sup>721</sup>

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<sup>717</sup> Alam, *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries*, 242.

<sup>718</sup> Allsen, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History*, 264.

<sup>719</sup> *Ibd.*

<sup>720</sup> John Pinkerton, *A General Collection of the best and most interesting Voyages and Travels in all Parts of the World. Many of which are now first translated into English*, London, 1808-1814, 150.

<sup>721</sup> Satish Chandra, *Medieval India. From Sultanat to the Mughals*, vol. 2. *The Mughal Empire 1526-1748*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., New Delhi, 2007, 247.



## END OF EXCURSUS

If we consider that Georgians occupied important offices such as falconer (which is all the more significant given that hunting was the only joy which Musta‘idd Hān attributed to his protagonist) and that Aurangzīb’s life-long favourite wife was a Georgian, it becomes clear why Musta‘idd Hān wanted to include this small subordinate clause into his text. He surely could have skipped it if he had not been convinced that the emphasis on such important and exclusive gifts might increase his protagonist’s status. More importantly, it seems to me that Musta‘idd Hān wanted to show that the kingdom of Aurangzīb was by no means an isolated and puritan state, but in fact remained an active player within the exchange processes linking pre-modern empires. Thus, we recognise another indirect appeal to the text’s recipient. Just as the *Ma‘āşir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*’s protagonist was surrounded by nobles who could arrange such exquisite gifts, the new ruler too should remain in contact with an entourage whose cultural horizons and interests did not stop at the empire’s borders.

At first glance, an analysis of the annual gift ceremony appears to be only slightly profitable: these sections really are quite monotonous. The ruler’s generosity is underlined, which is undoubtedly a crucial part of his legitimisation; however, this is not original in a pre-modern chronicle about a king. Nonetheless, as was shown in the present analysis, a hidden layer is behind these excerpts, one which contributes decisively to the author’s narrative strategy.

Therefore, Musta‘idd Hān was not only interested in showing that his former patron had endless resources and was magnanimous. Equally, the author’s emphasis on the promotions of loyal Hindu generals serves to repeatedly point out that his protagonist strongly believed in a specifically Mughal form of meritocracy. Anyone who struggled and devoted himself to the imperial idea could move forward and had the opportunity to climb the career ladder, regardless of whether they were Hindu or Muslim. In addition, the public and repeatedly practised act of forgiveness to rebels who were now repentant contributes to this strategy and combines with other narrative techniques in the author’s arsenal.

So, the apparently dry lists of numerous gifts appear to have significant deeper meaning. The author clearly emerges as an individual in the text, given his great interest in presents as the holder of the prestigious office of the royal gifts. The lists of presents also specifically underline his own cultural curiosity for everything beyond the borders of the Mughal realm. It is in these terms that the conspicuously long descriptions of gifts have to be understood, since these itineraries often describe in detail the numerous peculiarities of foreign countries. Even

in the little details, such as mentioning Georgians, we can recognise that our author possessed great horizons and that he sought to describe each minutia and its impressive features within his text. It is here where Mieke Bal's idea of close reading and Sanjay Subrahmanyam's notions of fragile threats and connected history come into play. With all these lists and hidden references, Musta'idd Hān was forwarding an indirect appeal to his recipient to seek the companionship of far-sighted aristocrats who brought interesting gifts and news from around the world and thereby contributed to the Mughals' splendour.

## CONCLUSION

In the first part of the chapter, we dealt with the question of why Musta'idd Hān, in the second half of the text, portrayed his protagonist Aurangzīb as an increasingly vulnerable, grieving, and isolated ruler. One possible reason may lie in the global crisis of the seventeenth century, which plunged many intellectuals into a deep identity crisis. Even if we ignore these overarching structures, we nevertheless should take into account Nile Green's argumentations with respect to the 'era's crisis of conscience'. It is indeed salient how Musta'idd Hān was eager to consistently describe Aurangzīb as an isolated and sorrowful ruler, especially in the second half of the text. Indeed, not only does Aurangzīb become more melancholic as we get closer to the text's conclusion, but the author also groups several characters around his protagonist, mostly high nobles, who he also portrayed as hopeless and even depressed. It thus seems quite reasonable to me to note that Musta'idd Hān might have wanted to capture within his text a certain emotional tendency of the time, namely the era's crisis of conscience.

The author's skilful narrative strategy also expresses itself on another level. From the eleventh chapter onwards, the author increasingly humanises the once omnipotent Aurangzīb. This humanisation serves Musta'idd Hān in two ways. Firstly, he succeeds in increasing his recipient's compassion towards the protagonist's errors. While we confront an unapproachable and flawless ruler in the text's first half, this changes significantly from the eleventh chapter onwards. Henceforth, Aurangzīb appears increasingly as desperate and frail. One can thus only feel pity for Musta'idd Hān's protagonist, especially at the conclusion of the text. This would have been difficult had the author portrayed Aurangzīb as an eternally youthful and all-powerful ruler, since such a portrait would have made it all the more easy to blame the former emperor for the crisis of 1707.

Secondly, through the protagonist's anthropomorphisation, the author also confidently positions himself within the text and takes the reins of the action into his own hand. This he

undertakes, for example, by reducing the distance between the aloof Aurangzīb and the other characters and through the strategic use of direct speech. Musta‘idd Ḥān uses this strategy as early as chapter eleven, where he positions himself in a story about the fate of a desperate miller, stylising himself as the anecdote’s actual initiator. Additionally, within that chapter he lets his protagonist seek closeness with the other characters: he approaches them directly and thereby breaks the earlier pathos of distance.

Of course, Musta‘idd Ḥān could only present this very daring characterisation cautiously and through many allusions: his duty was to stylise the heroic deeds of Aurangzīb for his son and posterity. He therefore adds the attributes of discipline, which is by far the dominant feature of his protagonist, and austerity. This is interesting when we consider that the classic historiographical narrative of the West’s rise, as most recently represented by Niall Ferguson, stresses the importance of discipline, punctuality, speed, and the subduing of nature in the process, all of which have been considered to be Protestant, Western European characteristics.

Furthermore, Musta‘idd Ḥān adds the ruler’s generosity, which is symbolised through the public giving of gifts and demonstrations of clemency. This may not seem very spectacular, as we are dealing with a pre-modern chronicle primarily aimed at glorifying the ruler. However, after a closer examination, we can see the text’s second layer. The annual gift-giving ceremony allows Musta‘idd Ḥān to put his years of experience and knowledge as a former guardian of the royal gifts to the test: once again, our *munšī* left his individual mark on this important text. No less than this, the delivery of gifts also helped him to prove his cultural curiosity: he inserts everything exotic and unusual into his text, partly through detailed lists and partly through the occasional reference. These brief remarks can be easily skipped during a quick reading. However, they still enable us to detect the text’s second level. In the case of Georgian slaves, Musta‘idd Ḥān sought to prove that Aurangzīb’s kingdom was by no means an isolated and ultra-orthodox empire. Instead, it was an entity that offered, even to Georgians, the opportunity to undertake prestigious roles at court, such as the royal falconer.

Mercy also plays a crucial role within Musta‘idd Ḥān’s narrative strategy, since it draws attention to a Mughal meritocracy. The author asserts that Aurangzīb would award anyone, whether Hindu or Muslim, so long as they subordinated themselves to the imperial idea. Finally, Musta‘idd Ḥān included surprisingly unorthodox traits in his textual representation of the protagonist, which served to increase the ruler’s popularity. Here, it is primarily music that plays a vital role: this will be the subject of a more detailed discussion in chapter 5.

In these terms, Musta‘idd Hān’s note right at the beginning of his text, that his protagonist made a ‘*wise*’ decision to enter into an alliance with loyal Hindus, is captivating. Evidently, Musta‘idd Hān did not construe the protagonist as a blind destroyer of temples; rather, he designed a much more multifaceted picture of Aurangzīb in order to pass this ideal of rule to his new emperor and the text’s intended recipient, Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur.



## CHAPTER 4: ON TEMPLE DESTRUCTION AND HINDU KILLINGS: THE NARRATIVE'S CONTINGENT EVENTS AND THE AUTHOR'S RELATIVISATION

### PRELUDE

In the following chapter we will analyse those crucial parts of the text that have been used in numerous studies since the release of Sarkar's translation in 1947 to prove Aurangzīb's allegedly principled aggression towards non-Muslim religions. At first sight, the quotations clearly speak for themselves: it would be, admittedly, very tempting to take these parts of the text alone without using a deeper methodological approach. If we did so, it would be easy to conclude that our author, Musta'idd Hān, as a representative of the Muslim intelligentsia of Mughal India in the early eighteenth century, consistently welcomed radical actions against the Hindus and the destruction of their temples. Furthermore, it would be possible to argue that the latter construed these anti-Hindu activities as the core element of Aurangzīb's legitimacy as a just Muslim ruler.

It has already been stated that since Sarkar's translation of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, this accusation against Musta'idd Hān has dominated most subsequent research. Sarkar inserted misleading headlines into the text that led untrained readers to believe that Musta'idd Hān would have honoured and appreciated Aurangzīb's anti-Hindu measures and ultra-orthodox form of governance without any criticism. A good example is the eleventh chapter, where Sarkar offered the headline 'Austerity at Court', referring to the onset of Aurangzīb's bigotry.<sup>722</sup> In this context, it is important to mention that Sarkar had already devised this argument in his early writings. In 1928, 19 years before he finished the translation of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, he portrayed Aurangzīb precisely in this light in a monumental five-volume study.<sup>723</sup> With his following translation of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, he sought to consolidate this image of a bigoted and ultra-orthodox Muslim ruler with an allegedly accurate translation of probably the most important source about Aurangzīb's life. He did so successfully. In Sajida Alvi's study, still the most detailed discussion of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, the author uncritically reflects Sarkar's assessments of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* and

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<sup>722</sup> Sarkar, *Ma'āṣiri Ālamgiri*, 45.

<sup>723</sup> Idem, *History of Aurangzīb*, 5 vols., Calcutta, 1912-1924.

Musta‘idd Ḥān’s qualities as a chronicler;<sup>724</sup> as late as 2012, Heidi Pauwels repeated the old interpretation, accusing Musta‘idd Ḥān of ‘religious polarization.’<sup>725</sup>

Within the following chapter, we will concentrate on the controversial beginning of the second part of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* (chapters 11-13). After the first years of struggle had passed (chapters 1-10), the now well-established new ruler could, so the classic argument goes, concentrate on his main objective: the spread of Islam throughout India, with violence if necessary.<sup>726</sup> However, two crucial aspects have been completely overlooked in all the previous studies on the source and its author.

Firstly, there is the issue of multiple authorship, which had a decisive influence on the text’s dichotomy; at least one other person had a significant impact on our author’s writing process and the text itself from the second part of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* onwards. I argue that it must have been the strictly conservative patron ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān, who sought to leave his personal touch, an ultra-orthodox view of Aurangzīb’s reign, within the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. The latter, as a representative of a strictly conservative style of government and the force behind the reintroduction of the *ḡizya* in 1679, figured as the leading light of the entire project; logically, he must have had an enormous influence on the text’s content. The latter’s influence increased in the second half of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, since, from the eleventh chapter onwards, Musta‘idd Ḥān was no longer dependent on Muḥammad Kāẓim’s *Ālamgīr-nāma*.

Secondly, the traditional interpretation of our source, as well as recent studies, at no point consider the complex conditions and circumstances in which Musta‘idd Ḥān started his work once his patron Aurangzīb passed away in 1707. Both aspects, the multiple authorship and Musta‘idd Ḥān’s complex working conditions, are, in my opinion, the decisive reason for this dichotomy in the second part of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. I argue that the clearly contradictory intentions of Musta‘idd Ḥān and ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān can explain the striking dichotomy that fluctuates between aggressive anti-Hindu actions and a surprisingly cosmopolitan vocabulary.

That being said, we face a few passages within the following analysis that will no doubt seem frightening at first glance: these clearly speak for themselves and provide no scope for an alternative reading. Here, we should recognise ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān’s intentions. We will cite passages which try to mitigate the anti-Hindu representations and analyse in detail their

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<sup>724</sup> Alvi, *The Historians of Awrangzeb*, 69-70.

<sup>725</sup> Pauwels, *A Tale of Two Temples*, 233.

<sup>726</sup> Steinfels, *Aurangzeb*.

connection with the initially frightening conflicts. In these sections, we should recognise Musta‘idd Hān’s intentions. After decades of work within a multi-ethnic and multicultural milieu, he certainly had a different view of the ideal form of governance that a Muslim ruler should adopt towards his non-Muslims subjects.

I will show that our author did not take the anti-Hindu campaigns for granted; rather, Musta‘idd Hān consistently attempted to portray the sanctions against the Hindus and temple destruction through a clever and sophisticated narrative strategy that put them into the correct perspective. Through several anecdotes, notes, and annual rites, such as the consistent promotion of Hindu noblemen, our author succeeded in mitigating the frightening sections in the text’s second part. Within the coming section, I want to show that, even in regards to these anti-Hindu campaigns, it is by no means easy to characterise Musta‘idd Hān as an advocate of ultra-orthodox practice or a dull and dogmatic thinker. Instead, I argue, our author had his own way of thinking ‘beyond Turk and Hindu’.<sup>727</sup>

This narrative strategy included two main forms of relativisation. Firstly, he used direct relativisations. This means that Musta‘idd Hān placed a decisive sentence within the controversial event itself. This helped to relativise the destruction of a temple or the execution of rebellious Hindus. As we shall see, these direct relativisations are extremely diverse and cannot be summarised in a fixed scheme. This is partly because Musta‘idd Hān often used direct relativisations in a single sentence or sometimes even a word. However, despite their brevity, the direct relativisations fulfil a crucial function and accordingly must be analysed in detail.

In contrast, Musta‘idd Hān had much more freedom to use indirect relativisations. These indirect relativisations additionally contribute to relativising and mitigating acts that initially appear discouraging by distributing certain anecdotes over the entire chapter discussing the deterring event. For example, the description of the destruction of Hindu temples is reported at the beginning of the chapter and is then followed by a number of relativising anecdotes. These indirect relativising anecdotes can be divided into six main themes. These are:

1. The humanisation of the protagonist.
2. The permanent textual state of emergency.
3. The description of the protagonist as a caring father of all his subjects.

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<sup>727</sup> I refer to Gilmartin, *Beyond Turk and Hindu*.



4. The description of the protagonist and his army as disciplined, spartan, and just (in contrast to their enemies).
5. The annual promotion of loyal Hindu nobles.
6. The successful collaboration between Hindus and Muslims.

The conflicts relativised by these six methods are in turn subdivided into three main types. These types are the most frequently cited points of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, as they provide the perfect basis for the traditional argumentation that describes Aurangzīb as a wild temple-destroyer and our author as a blind supporter of the violent crackdown on dissenters and non-Muslim institutions

1. The destruction of Hindu temples.<sup>728</sup>
2. The public execution of rebellious Hindu nobles.<sup>729</sup>
3. Sections that report disparagingly about 'infidels' and their fighting and killing.<sup>730</sup>

I will explain the relativisation strategies in detail in reference to the chapters where they appear for the first time. In the first section of this chapter, Musta'idd Hān uses indirect strategies 1-4. The fifth anecdote of relativisation then plays a crucial role in the second section, while the final sixth one will be described in an excursus which closes this chapter.

Finally, it needs to be mentioned that the chapter is structured differently, since in sections one and three, we only meet one threatening excerpt; however, it is exceptional and therefore needs to be analysed in detail. In each section, I will discuss the direct anecdotes of relativisation first and then the indirect ones. Section two works a bit differently. Here, we meet a total of five contingent events: all of them receive direct and indirect relativisation. However, the procedure remains the same: I will firstly present each conflict and then offer an analysis of the direct and indirect anecdotes of relativisation.

It is impossible to list all the conflicts in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* in detail in the confines of a single study. I therefore focus on the first three chapters of the second section (chapters 11-13) to exemplify how our author dealt with these sometimes highly critical sections and how he made every effort to relativise them. After the detailed discussion of chapters 11 and 12, we gain a better understanding of Musta'idd Hān's techniques of relativisation. We then devote ourselves to the thirteenth chapter, the one which includes the most striking example of an anti-Hindu campaign, namely the destruction of the Mathura Temple.

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<sup>728</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 84, 88, 95-96, 171, 173, 175, 186, 188, 189, 194, 397.

<sup>729</sup> Idem, 167, 195, 296.

<sup>730</sup> Idem, 241, 243, 329, 392, 404, 444, 454.

Before we move into the analysis, it is necessary to have a quick look at how narratological studies approach conflict in general and why it has such a crucial role within the analysis of narrative strategies. I will then address the question of why our author showered his lines with so many conflicts and disasters, which ultimately serve to present his readers with a detailed and constant textual state of emergency. We subsequently dedicate ourselves to a detailed analysis of the contingent events in chapters 11-13, the conflict-laden beginning of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*'s second half.

## SECTION 1: CONFLICTS AND NARRATIVE

### PRELUDE

In the following summary, I will discuss briefly why a detailed analysis of the conflicts in a chronicle such as the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* helps us to decipher the author's individual narrative strategy. The coming conflicts are of crucial importance for the political legitimization of Aurangzīb, who, ultimately, always emerges as the winner. Equally, through the analysis of the conflicts, we witness how much our author sought to circumscribe and rewrite these struggles in order to put them into the correct perspective and to avoid portraying Aurangzīb as a principled Hindu-hater. Even if the conflicts in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* may seem monotonous at first glance, I want to show in the coming chapter that they in fact possess a second, much more interesting narrative level.

The targeted narratological analysis of conflicts in different types of genres is a very well-researched field.<sup>731</sup> In her standard work, Marie-Laure Ryan argues that a story can only arise if the characters, duties, wishes, and intentions are not in compliance with each other.<sup>732</sup> This mismatch in the broadest sense defines a conflict:<sup>733</sup>

By far the most important formal requirement on the level of a plot is the existence at some point of conflict between the desires, knowledge, or obligations of different characters, or between those of one character and the state of affairs of the storyworld, though conflict is so fundamental to stories that it could be regarded as a condition of narrativity (...)<sup>734</sup>

The essence of a plot, therefore, is the formation and resolution of various conflicts, since the plot derives its momentum from conflicts. Thus, Sarkar's criticism, that the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* lacks any rhetorical qualities and reads like an official gazette, is not accurate. Indeed, the opposite is the case: Musta'idd Ḥān's various conflicts are proof of his skilled storytelling and narrative strategy. However, before we go into the analysis of the conflicts, I will substantiate this argument further. For, as we shall see here, no other Mughal chronicler after Jauhar Āftābchī had to discuss so many different conflicts within a single text or lived through such a profound period of crisis as that which struck the empire between 1707 and 1710.

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<sup>731</sup> Mona Baker, *Translation and Conflict. A Narrative Account*, London, 2006; Peter Kellett and Diana Dolton (eds.), *Managing Conflict in a Negotiated World. A Narrative Approach to Achieving Dialogue and Change*, London, 2001; Horace Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, Cambridge, 2008, 55f.

<sup>732</sup> Marie-Laure Ryan, *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory*, Bloomington, 1991.

<sup>733</sup> Finfern, *Narratologie und biblische Exegese*, 113 ff.

<sup>734</sup> David Herman, et al. (eds.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, London, 2005, 590.

## ON THE AUTHOR AND THE PROTAGONIST'S PERMANENT STATE OF EMERGENCY AND MUSTA'IDD ḤĀN'S PERCEPTION OF AURANGZĪB'S REALPOLITIK

In his recent major study, Geoffrey Parker describes the seventeenth century as a global century of catastrophe. While the historical debate has focused primarily on Europe (such as in the pioneering works of Hugh Trevor-Roper),<sup>735</sup> Parker adds early modern non-European empires in China, India, and Africa. The focus of his investigations lies on the global climate of the seventeenth century, changes to which resulted in mass immigrations, famine, and rebellions. His section on the Mughal Empire helps us to further our argument, as it shows that Aurangzīb's life and his long reign was decisively influenced by this global crisis.

*Prima facie*, the first few years of Aurangzīb's reign were certainly characterised by the successful consolidation of his rule.<sup>736</sup> However, his reign could not escape the global crisis: Aurangzīb was both a victim and an active part of the turmoil which would shape his kingdom for the next 50 years. Although he launched numerous measures to try and control the crisis, such as the abolition of more than 80 taxes and building numerous almshouses,<sup>737</sup> never-ending troubles and natural disasters disturbed his rule from the beginning. Only a few months after his official takeover:

(...) in 1659 (.) southeast India saw 'so great famine' that, according to resident English merchants, 'the people (are) dying daily for want of food', while in Gujarat 'the famine and plague' became 'so great' that (as in 1630-32) they 'swept away the most part of the people, and those that are left are few' (...) The monsoon failed again in 1660, and the same English merchants lamented the 'great dearth' in the southeast 'now these eighteen months'; while their colleagues in Gujarat believed that 'never famine raged worse in any place, the living being hardly able to bury the dead.'<sup>738</sup>

This state of emergency is also confirmed by numerous Mughal chroniclers. However, these misfortunes were by no means limited to the empire's periphery, as reported by British contemporary witnesses: they also ravaged its centre.

In 1662, a major fire destroyed large parts of Shahjahanabad, while the price of grain in Gujarat approached famine levels because the 'very little rain this last year' was 'not sufficient to

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<sup>735</sup> Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change and Other Essays*, London, 1967.

<sup>736</sup> Hermann Kulke, *Indische Geschichte bis 1750*, Oldenburg, 2005, 87.

<sup>737</sup> For the coming crisis see Geoffrey Parker, *Global Crisis, War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century*, New Haven, 2013, 409 f.

<sup>738</sup> *Ibd.*

produce corn except in some particular places, and (even) there not more than half and quarter crops (...)' . A new revenue survey compiled for Aurangzīb's treasury showed that receipts from the ten core provinces of the empire had fallen 20 per cent below pre-war levels.<sup>739</sup>

Shireen Moosvi interprets the crisis of 1658-70, which immediately broke out in the year of Aurangzīb's accession to the throne, as the beginning of the decline of the Mughals.<sup>740</sup> It indeed seems reasonable to see the main causes of the remarkably rapid decline of the empire after Aurangzīb's death in 1707 in the events that shaped Mughal India in the second half of the seventeenth century, the period about which the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* reports.<sup>741</sup> These events consist of numerous famines, natural disasters, and the never-ending military actions in the Deccan, which, given the global crisis, could hardly have started at a worse time. The aforementioned events joined together with Aurangzīb's unpopular religious and political measures to cause the cup of rebellion to runneth over. To refer once again to Parker:

Aurangzīb died in 1707 while on campaign in the south. He had attempted to put the whole of India into a straitjacket of his own making but in the end it all proved a complete failure. By the time of his death the empire had never been bigger but it was so weakened that it never fully recovered. His successors [among whom our author continued his career until his death in 1724, TK] attempted to make peace with the Hindus of the south and to undo some of his excesses but with little success. Very soon after his death [precisely the time when Musta'idd Ḥān started his work on the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, TK], the empire began to show signs of disintegration.<sup>742</sup>

Thus, in 1739, only 15 years after the death of our author, Nadir Shah conquered the weakened empire and stole the peacock throne, the symbol of the power of the Mughal dynasty. Although the Mughal Empire still possessed a considerable reservoir of manpower in the run-up to the war against Nadir Shah, its decline could no longer be resisted: 'The Great Moghuls of the seventeenth century degenerated into embarrassed phantoms in the eighteenth century.'<sup>743</sup> While our author was spared from having to suffer the plunder of Delhi in the spring of 1739, which claimed tens of thousands of lives, he nevertheless had to process two essential contingent events in his text.

First of all, there was Aurangzīb's lack of success in the Deccan. Despite decades of effort and the mobilisation of all of the empire's considerable resources, Aurangzīb never fully

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<sup>739</sup> Ibid. Additionally, Parker lists more drastic examples on the following pages.

<sup>740</sup> Shireen Moosvi, *Economy of the Mughal Empire. A Statistical Study*, New Delhi, 1987.

<sup>741</sup> In detail Seema Alavi, 'Introduction' in Seema Alavi (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century in India*, New Delhi, 2002, 1-56.

<sup>742</sup> Geoffrey Parker, *Power in Stone. Cities as Symbols of Empire*, London, 2014, 119.

<sup>743</sup> Ibid.

succeeded in defeating the Marathas.<sup>744</sup> From 1707 onwards, it became clear to our author and to the whole Mughal elite that the end of imperial expansion had begun and that they most certainly would not witness the insertion of all of India into the empire in their lifetimes.

Secondly, our author also had to realise that Aurangzīb, his protagonist, obviously made mistakes during his reign: Musta‘idd Hān could not avoid mentioning these in Aurangzīb’s official chronicle. These errors include frequently clumsy religious policy decisions, such as the reintroduction of the *Ġizya*, which bestowed considerable ammunition to Aurangzīb’s opponents in the tense state of permanent war, and the destruction of temples: however, both decisions need to be seen as acts of *Realpolitik* from the centre’s perspective.

As Louis Fenech summarised in his study about the Sikhs, ‘(...) Aurangzīb’s fidelity to the practice of *Realpolitik* (...)’<sup>745</sup> shaped the final years of his reign. Unfortunately, there is no detailed examination available that separates Aurangzīb’s *Realpolitik* from issues of religious legitimacy. It seems very likely, however, that some of the Mughal emperors governed the Delhi Sultanate pragmatically, focusing on their predecessors’ skills in diplomacy with their powerful neighbour Vijayanagara: Vijayanagara flourished as a self-consciously Hindu island in a Muslim sea. Nevertheless, accounts of interstate relations in the Deccan in this period suggest that Vijayanagara’s relations with other states were determined by *Realpolitik* rather than religion.<sup>746</sup>

Although our author did not use this concept in his text, Musta‘idd Hān describes his protagonist as a pragmatic ruler who never got carried away by emotions when it came to political decisions. In order to preserve the safety of the empire, said Musta‘idd Hān, Aurangzīb had no problem with creating alliances with the Hindus, setting limits to European influence, and forgiving Hindu deserters in public. Hence, we could say that Musta‘idd Hān categorised the ideal politics embodied by his protagonist under the term ‘*Realpolitik*’.

To write about *Realpolitik* also meant to talk about the ruler’s failures. Hence, to incorporate the fiasco in the Deccan and the religious and political mistakes of the protagonist into his text meaningfully, our author did not evade these narrative fractures in any way. Rather, Musta‘idd Hān, with a striking degree of acceptance, converted the former state of emergency

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<sup>744</sup> Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*, 187-98.

<sup>745</sup> Louis Fenech, *The Sikh Zafar-namah of Guru Gobind Singh. A Discursive Blade in the Heart of the Mughal Empire*, New York, 2013, 67; see also, in regard of a new evaluation of Aurangzīb’s politics, Copland, *A History of State and Religion in India*.

<sup>746</sup> Swarna Rajagopalan, ‘Secularism in India. Accepted Principle, Contentious Interpretation’ in William Safran (ed.), *The Secular and the Sacred. Nation, Religion, and Politics*, London, 2003, 241-259, 228-244, 234.

into a *textual* state of permanent emergency and used it as a decisive part of his narrative strategy. As he confronts the recipient with disasters throughout the text, Aurangzīb and his entourage appear as victims. In this way, Musta‘idd Hān represented Aurangzīb’s actions from a victim’s perspective and substantially increased sympathy for him. Aurangzīb’s obvious errors, the consequences of which the main recipient of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, Šāh Bahādur, had to face immediately after his father’s death were therefore considerably relativised.

Before we discuss these aspects in detail to answer the question of how exactly our author dealt with each specific social and historical context and how he processed the state of his protagonist into his text, let us first look at how modern research has interpreted conflicts and social turmoil in Mughal chronicles from a narrative standpoint.

### ON CONTINGENT EVENTS IN MUGHAL CHRONICLES

Until recently, researchers were not interested in how Mughal chroniclers transposed these kinds of disasters and narrative fractures into their texts. For a very long time, studies that dealt with Mughal sources were primarily interested in their factual framework, scanning the text for new facts and comparing them with previously accumulated data. Of course, the chronicles were also the basis for numerous important cultural and historical analyses; take, for example, the description of the court or cultural connections with societies and cultures beyond India. However, why the authors of chronicles described conflicts in their own individual ways has not been examined until recently.

Breaking away from older analyses, Stephan Conermann and Nader Purnaqcheband focused on how Mughal chroniclers dealt with such harrowing crises and how they implemented them into their narrative strategies. Both were able to demonstrate that the presentation of the experience of contingency was in no way just a monotonous description of disasters. Although the authors did indeed align the text’s first level according to a normative pattern, each narrative strategy was distinct and often had a much deeper meaning.

Conermann bases his analysis mainly on the term *Kontingenzerfahren* (the experience of contingency), which he derived from Jörn Drüsen’s important studies.<sup>747</sup> The latter defines this term as contingent events in individual or social life explained by meaningful historiography. The focus of contingency among the Muslims of India, and especially their

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<sup>747</sup> Jörn Rüsen, et al., *Die Vielfalt der Kulturen. Erinnerung, Geschichte, Identität*, vol. 4, Frankfurt/Main, 1998.

courtly elite, was their awareness of the fact that they lived and ruled as a minority in a country whose majority belonged to Hinduism, a polytheistic and iconophile religion.

Nader Purnaqcheband continued Conermann's approach and applied it in detail to Jauhar Āftābchī's *Tazkirat al-Wāqi'āt*, the chronicle of Humāyūn's reign (governed 1530-1540 and 1555-1556). Purnaqcheband distanced himself from previous studies on the *Tazkirat al-wāqi'āt*. As is the case with our source, the scholarly consensus attributed very little talent to the author and stamped his text as an inferior one. However, Purnaqcheband proved that Jauhar Āftābchī's sophisticated narrative strategy included the never-ending experiences of contingency that Humāyūn and his entourage had to suffer during their escape and exile.

With these preliminary considerations, let us now move onto the analysis of the text. We will focus on the start of the second half of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* (chapters 11-13). The depiction of these chapters in older studies has been one-dimensional. This traditional approach is characterised by the fact that controversial quotations were cited without any deeper analysis and without any methodological approach. The goal here was to prove both Aurangzīb's incipient religious bigotry and his hatred of Hindus, as well as Musta'idd Ḥān's blind worship of these controversial actions as an important representative of the Muslim intelligentsia of Mughal India. This Manichean picture needs correction.

## CONFLICT: THE REMOVAL OF THE STONE ELEPHANTS

### THE DIRECT RELATIVISATION

At the beginning of our analysis, we move to events in Delhi in the winter of 1669, which are placed in the middle of the eleventh chapter. Musta'idd Ḥān writes:

The Emperor, in order to obey the rules of the Holy law and to put down uncanonical innovations, ordered the removal of the two stone elephants of exactly the same size which had been made by skilful artisans and placed on the two side-posts of the fort, from which circumstance the door was called Hatiapul.<sup>748</sup>

At first glance, this section appears unspectacular. However, it is at this point that the red thread of Musta'idd Ḥān's narrative strategy commences, one which will dominate the entire second half of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*. In the analysis of the following excerpts, I want to prove the following. By each of the quoted anti-Hindu actions, our author skilfully positioned one or more anecdotes which deter the reader from these distracting events. The aim of this

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<sup>748</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 77; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 49.



strategy was to shield the protagonist in retrospect from the accusation of being a temple destroyer and Hindu-hater.

Let us look firstly at what tactics our author deployed to describe the removal of the stone elephants. I will begin with the direct relativisation: ‘(...) Stone elephants (*pīl*) of exactly the same size which had been made by skilful artisans.’ Undoubtedly, the removal of these elephants would have been an ideal opportunity for the author to condemn this form of non-Islamic architecture much more clearly and to brand it as laughable.<sup>749</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān could have applied a much more aggressive vocabulary, labelling the artists as talentless infidels. On closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that our author wanted to represent this event as a decision that corresponded to the general common sense of Muslim scholars in that period. Today, an unschooled reader can take this incident as clear evidence of Aurangzīb’s incipient orthodoxy and a spectacular break with his cosmopolitan predecessors (especially if one consults Sarkar’s translation and its misleading headline ‘Austerity at Court’). However, from the author’s point of view, this was a rather unspectacular event which only needed to be mentioned in passing.

For centuries, representatives of a traditional Islamic understanding of art argued that one should not create an exact image of the object under study, be it in painting or sculpture. This form of creative activity corresponds to a divine act, which falls to the Creator himself alone.<sup>750</sup> The stone elephants indeed were the same size as living ones, as Musta‘idd Ḥān emphasises (‘exactly the same size’). Therefore, it is clear that the author depicts the action as being based upon the classic argument about art in Islam: it thus does not prove that Aurangzīb enacted an ultra-orthodox break with the legacy of his predecessors.

Indeed, the dismantling of non-Muslim monuments and idols was practised by his predecessors. Consider the popular story of Jahangir’s visit to the lake of Pushkar and the destruction of the idols there in 1613 or the tale of how his son and successor, Šāh Ġāhān, destroyed the great temple at Orchha in 1635.<sup>751</sup> Compared with Jahangir’s action, who has never been stigmatised as a destroyer of temples, Aurangzīb’s action appears almost mild, at least in the way our author represents it. It is therefore clear that Musta‘idd Ḥān is keen to directly revise the image of an aggressive juggernaut of a ruler and instead present a rather

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<sup>749</sup> The topoi of destroyed elephant statues can be found in numerous popular scientific studies and travel guides, such as David Abram, *India. The Rough Guide*, London 1994, 264.

<sup>750</sup> For a detailed discussion on that topic see Hans Belting, *Florenz und Bagdad. Eine westöstliche Geschichte des Blicks*, Munich 2009.

<sup>751</sup> Richard Earton, ‘Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States’; Chandra, *Medieval India*, 250.

rational ruler who stuck to a classic interpretation of Islamic law and not an aggressive interpretation of the Sharia.

This being said, we also have to consider that this classical reasoning corresponds to the official teachings of religious scholars. These teachings, however, had always been evaded, which in turn led to impressive artistic achievements and mutual cultural adaptations in the centres of early modern Islamic empires, especially at the Mughal court.<sup>752</sup> It is in this context that the author conspicuously praises the abilities of the artists as ‘skilful’ (*iḥtirāf*). As Musta‘idd Hān could have simply not made this comment or could have mocked the artist, this word again demonstrates our author’s confidence in giving his own opinion on such a delicate subject. From this brief subordinate clause, which in a quick reading can easily be ignored (and indeed has been overlooked by research and deemphasised by Sarkar’s misleading headlines), the tolerant and multicultural mood of the *munšī* milieu speaks to us once more. We therefore witness that our author, as an intellectual and elite Muslim, obviously had no problem with assessing uncanonical behaviour and art by his own standards, even going so far as to explicit praise that art.

It is exactly in these sections, however short they may be, that the analysis of the recipient comes into play. Let us remember once again that it was Aurangzīb’s successor Bahādur Šāh Alam who was as the primary recipient of the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. With these short sentences, I argue, our author addressed a clear message to the recipient. Here, a *munšī* voice piped up to meet the new ruler with self-confidence and express his own opinions with regard to controversial decisions, albeit cautiously and with all due respect to existing power structures at the court.

In this context, it is also interesting to see that Musta‘idd Hān’s presentation shows clear parallels with the short description of the same stone elephants by his controversial predecessor Abū l-Faḍl. The latter was hated more than any other author during Akbar’s reign by ultra-conservative religious scholars who rejected in the strongest terms his revolutionary concept of a tolerant state religion, the *dīn-i l-lāhi*. Abūl Faḍl also raises the performance of these stonemasons in his prominent *Ā’in-i Akbārī* in a strikingly similar manner: ‘at the eastern gate are two elephants of stone with their riders graven with exquisite skill.’<sup>753</sup>

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<sup>752</sup> Of course this is a very brief sketch of a highly complex field of research. Historical analysis of the early modern Islamic empires, as for Islamic history in general, is still stuck in its early stages. See, for example, the pioneering works of Ebba Koch such as idem, *Mughal Architecture. An Outline of its History and Development (1526-1858)*, rev. ed., New Delhi, 2014.

<sup>753</sup> Beveridge, *The Akbarnama of Abūl-Faḍl*, Vol. II., 180.

If our author was a true representative of an ultra-conservative Islam, as the previous research has characterised him, he would have designed this anecdote quite differently. He would have dispensed with the praise of the artist, which does not fit into a text which allegedly celebrated the anti-Hindu actions of Aurangzīb. Nor would he have appropriated Abū l-Faḥr's opinion, who called for a synthesis of the religions of India and the tolerant coexistence of Islam and Hinduism, for which he was criticised by members of the conservative religious elite like the influential Aḥmad al-Farūqī as-Sirhindī (died 1624).<sup>754</sup>

Therefore, the present anecdote, which in Sarkar's translation so clearly provides a starting point for the ultra-conservative religious policies of Aurangzīb, is significantly mitigated, as we see no trace of the humiliation of non-Muslim religions and cultures, let alone any form of aggressive religious vocabulary. Rather, at the heart of this nondescript anecdote is the individual performance of the artist and his emerging self-consciousness. Ultimately, we should see this as an indirect criticism of Aurangzīb's decision to demolish such beautiful elephants, since the author emphasises the statues' majesty.

We will later discuss in detail Aurangzīb's alleged music ban, which is used again and again to prove that the latter, as an ultra-orthodox Muslim ruler, showed no interest in any art outside of the calligraphy, let alone on craft or architecture.<sup>755</sup> To the contrary, Musta'idd Ḥān reiterates, albeit in a prudent manner, that this form of artistic creation was quite welcome and esteemed at court, especially among the *munšīs*, and that it was no problem for a member of the Muslim intelligentsia to publicly articulate his admiration, even though such art had been officially classified by the ruler as un-Islamic.

Let us now look at how this controversial event fits into the entirety of chapter eleven. As we will see, our author by no means stops with a direct relativisation. Rather, he commences at this point, in a skilful and cautious manner, a repeating pattern of anecdotes which all serve to relativise Aurangzīb's controversial acts in an indirect way.

## THE INDIRECT RELATIVISATIONS

Musta'idd Ḥān usually initiates indirect relativisations within a chapter by grouping various anecdotes around an event that might feel at first glance intimidating and in retrospect be blamed on the protagonist. With his relativising anecdotes, Musta'idd Ḥān has three main objectives. Firstly, he relativises the critical decisions of Aurangzīb, especially in religious

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<sup>754</sup> See Wink, *Akbar*.

<sup>755</sup> Parker, *Power in Stone*, 117.

and cultural matters, by displaying them from an explanatory perspective. He secondly establishes a relationship between the protagonist and the recipient to ensure that the latter can identify with Aurangzīb emotionally. Finally, he significantly increases sympathy for Aurangzīb.

This allows Musta‘idd Ḥān to describe Aurangzīb as the ideal Muslim ruler, not as a wild and blind enemy of the Hindus. For this purpose, Musta‘idd Ḥān uses six narrative techniques that exert their function and effect in relation to the onset of the increasingly controversial events in the second part of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. These six anecdotes are:

1. The humanisation of the protagonist. Musta‘idd Ḥān uses such anecdotes to depict emotional proximity to the protagonist so that the recipient can identify with Aurangzīb’s actions.
2. The textual state of permanent emergency that pervades the whole text. The protagonist acts for the sake of defence, which allows the recipient to develop compassion for the protagonist.
3. The description of the protagonist as a caring father of all his subordinates, including the Hindus. This portrait clearly increases sympathy towards the protagonist and towards the Hindu nobles that surrounded the new Emperor Bahādur Šāh Alam as vital members of his entourage.
4. The annual promotion of loyal Hindu generals. In this way, Musta‘idd Ḥān illustrates that religion did not hinder a successful career at court. Rather, it was loyalty and discipline that secured the attention and benevolence of the ruler.
5. Curious anecdotes that directly emphasise successful cooperation between Muslims and Hindus as well as highlight their solidarity in the battle. With these anecdotes, Musta‘idd Ḥān seeks to underline the continuity between Aurangzīb’s tolerant predecessors and his former patron.
6. The description of the protagonist and his army as disciplined, spartan, and just. This increases the awe and respect for the protagonist significantly while drawing a sharp contrast with enemies’ chaotic barbarism.

Let us now look at the different narrative techniques and their function in detail. In the following section, Musta‘idd Ḥān uses narrative strategies 1 to 4 in order to relativise the removal of the stone elephants. The fifth, the annual promotion of loyal Hindu nobleman, is discussed in section two and the sixth in the chapter’s excursus.

## 1. THE PROTAGONIST'S ANTHROPOMORPHISATION

### [FIVE PAGES BEFORE THE REMOVAL OF THE STONE ELEPHANTS]

We already discussed in chapter three the crucial aspect of the protagonist's anthropomorphisation. This literary technique fulfils its function at the very beginning of the second part of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, where the removal of the stone elephants takes place. As Aurangzīb's controversial religious decisions increase in number in the second part, the author skilfully starts to humanise his protagonist. In this way, our author clearly distances his narrative strategy from the first part of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, where we did not receive any information about the ruler's human attributes; for all intents and purposes, Aurangzīb is presented as infallible and godlike. A major reason for this is the fact that our author refers primarily to the *'Ālam-nāma*. This text expressed no criticism of the protagonist, as it was written during Aurangzīb's lifetime and under his direct censorship. If we take this into account, the recipient in the first half of *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* would scarcely have been able to identify at any point with the emotionless and aloof protagonist, and thus could not establish any emotional connections with him.<sup>756</sup>

The situation is completely different in the text's second part. The sophisticated narrative strategy our author pursues in this section is astonishing. Only five pages prior to the removal of the stone elephants, an unprecedented event occurs. The author begins to break down the consistent demarcation between Aurangzīb and the other characters in order to reduce the previous pathos of distance.

It is the end of March and Abdualлах Ḥān, the king expelled from Kashgar, receives an audience with the ruler. Musta'idd Ḥān writes:

After an hour, the Emperor appeared. The Ḥān went to him, made his salutation, and shook hands with his Majesty. The Emperor took him by his hand to the mosque (...) The Ḥān bowed, the emperor laid his hand on his gracious breast. At his command, he stood in front of the Emperor near the fountain and was presented with tuighun-falcon.<sup>757</sup>

This event, which initially seems to be only of middling importance, is crucial to the changing narrative strategy of our writer. First of all, this important narrative break in the protagonist's

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<sup>756</sup> Rüdiger Schnell, 'Erzähler - Protagonist - Rezipient im Mittelalter, oder: Was ist der Gegenstand der literaturwissenschaftlichen Emotionsforschung?' in *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2009, 1-51; Claudia Hillebrandt, *Das emotionale Wirkungspotential von Erzähltexten. Mit Fallstudien zu Kafka, Perutz und Werfel*, Berlin, 2011. Especially the introduction to the second chapter (Zum Emotionalen Wirkungspotential von Erzähltexten), 27-138.

<sup>757</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 73-73; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 46.

humanisation begins in the very chapter in which our author expressly points out that he is no longer referring to the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*. Secondly, Musta‘idd Ḥān starts the humanisation of Aurangzīb’s character before the first anti-Hindu activities.

We thus recognise that Musta‘idd Ḥān is using his own narrative strategy from this point on. This is clear, since this is the first time in the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* that Aurangzīb touches the hand of another character, which, in terms of the highly complex court etiquette of the Mughals, is an extremely important event. With the beginning of the description and the highlighting of the ruler’s limbs, the author starts upon a decisive new direction within his narrative strategy. The timing of Musta‘idd Ḥān’s new narrative technique is therefore ideally chosen. As the protagonist’s humanisation begins, the recipient starts to identify with the protagonist’s action more and more. While the protagonist is still consistently described as a powerful and successful ruler in the second part of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, the author nevertheless cautiously initiates a process of humanisation within the text to constantly remind the recipient of Aurangzīb’s vulnerability and advancing age.

This form of humanisation, which mainly describes the process of aging, allows Šāh Bahādur to identify with Aurangzīb’s actions. As the former could not ascend to the throne before the age of 64 in 1707 and thus had no access to the text before 1710, nothing would have been more confusing to him than a chronicle that solely reported about an eternally youthful Aurangzīb. It would have been almost impossible for Bahādur Šāh to identify with such a protagonist, let alone consider his erroneous actions from a forgiving perspective. Rather, this would have created antagonism, in the sense that the primary recipient would have encountered a protagonist with whom he could not have identified with at any point and whose actions he rejected.

The author, therefore, would have hardly been able to select a better narrative technique than to introduce the onset of the anti-Hindu campaigns alongside the process of Aurangzīb’s humanisation. Let us now consider the second essential narrative technique that also contributes decisively to relativising the problematic actions of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*’s second part.

## 2. THE PERMANENT STATE OF EMERGENCY

### [FOUR PAGES BEFORE THE REMOVAL OF THE STONE ELEPHANTS]

In the second half of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, the permanent state of emergency is one of Musta'idd Ḥān's essential narrative strategies.<sup>758</sup> However, in comparison to the permanent state of emergency in the second chapter that mainly focused on the threat of the nature, its appearance at this later juncture is much more multifarious. Furthermore, by describing his protagonist mainly as the narrative's victim, the author succeeds in describing the Mughal troops as consistently disciplined and renders all of their military actions as defensive measures. From now on, the Mughal troops react firstly against their enemies' superior numbers and secondly against their repulsive brutality and barbarism.

This barbarism from the Hindus receives a prominent position, as the author faces a more difficult task to overcome as a chronicler. This task is the relativisation of Aurangzīb's unpopular religious decisions and occasionally drastic anti-Hindu activities. To overcome this obstacle, the permanent state of emergency from chapter eleven onwards becomes much more complex. This is clear in a section four pages before the dismantling of the stone elephants, where the recipient is confronted with an unprecedented range of disasters. These emerge not only from ruthless nature, but also from the enigmatic monsters which we already met in chapter one.

In this setting, it almost seems as if Judgment Day had arrived in Aurangzeb's realm. Here, Musta'idd Ḥān cleverly designed a scenario with clear parallels to the eschatological prophecies of the Quran.<sup>759</sup> The ground shakes,<sup>760</sup> giant creatures appear, and the land is covered with sorrow.<sup>761</sup> Thunder kills numerous people and robs the peasants of consciousness.<sup>762</sup> The onset of monsoon season tears down even the walls of the vast fortress Jaunpur.<sup>763</sup> With the beginning of the second portion of *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, the recipient enters a second phase of the permanent state of emergency, as nothing seems secure anymore. It is not just threatening nature that has been directed against the kingdom of the protagonist.

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<sup>758</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 93, 144, 126, 179, 207-208, 268-269, 278-281, 346, 410.

<sup>759</sup> Angelika Neuwirth, 'Structural, Linguistic and Literary Features' in Jane McAuliffe (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an*, Cambridge, 2006, 97-114, especially 104 ff. on 'eschatological prophecies'; idem, 'Structure and the Emergence of Community' in Andrew Rippin (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'an*, Malden, MA, 2006, 140-158., 150 ff.

<sup>760</sup> See e.g. Q 99:19-20.

<sup>761</sup> See e.g. Q 18:94.

<sup>762</sup> See e.g. Q 41:17.

<sup>763</sup> See e.g. Q 24:43.

There are now monsters to be found, such as the goblin mentioned in chapter one. These play a decisive role in the protracted state of emergency. After Musta‘idd Hān was able to put aside the *‘Ālam-nāma*, he could finally apply his own narrative strategy. With such a complex and diverse representation of threats and disasters, he is obviously pursuing a new path in his narrative technique and sending a clear message to his recipient. With each page, the threat to the protagonists and the Mughal Empire becomes more complex. It is thus with a view to this backdrop that the recipient had to assess Aurangzīb’s failures and contentious decisions. The heightening state of emergency in the second half of the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* thus fulfils a crucial role within the narrative strategy of our author.

With this sinister and complex threat, Musta‘idd Hān’s next narrative technique now displays its function. It is here where we see how our author specifically arranged anecdotes around the critical events of his narrative in order to successfully relativise them. After this tension-inducing anecdote, it is now time to let the protagonist shine with a clear counteraction.

### 3. THE PROTAGONIST AS A CARING FATHER OF ALL OF HIS SUBJECTS

#### [TWO PAGES BEFORE THE REMOVAL OF THE STONE ELEPHANTS]

The author must have been aware that, with the removal of the stone elephants, a trend started that might bring the reign of the protagonist considerable criticism, especially after his death, even if his former patron was just obeying the rules of traditional Islam. The author’s awareness of this fact becomes visible two pages before the removal of the stone elephants, where he placed another relativising anecdote:

The Emperor ordered to search for and send manacled and fettered to the court those men who castrated children and to regard it as peremptory order that no one should be allowed to engage in this vicious practice.<sup>764</sup>

Here, our author describes Aurangzīb as a caring patron of all the children in the kingdom, one who took care of even the smallest details and commanded his governors to send all those who violated the law to his court to be punished accordingly. By digging deeper, we also witness a narrative technique similar to the one that our author applied at the critical end of the fourth chapter. Here, Musta‘idd Hān prepared the reader carefully for the coming catastrophe of Assam by portraying playing children as victims who are beaten to death by a careless judge.

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<sup>764</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 75; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma’āṣiri Ālamgiri*, 48.



A curious incident was reported to the emperor; in the village of Sonepat, a party of boys had played at being king and ministers. In jest, two of them were charged with theft and taken by a mock policeman to the king, who ordered punishment. The senseless policeman hit the two on the head with the stick he carried so hard that they were killed, and thus the game proved fatal.<sup>765</sup>

With this anecdote about children, Musta'idd Hān aims to divert attention from the cracks in the narrative and to present his protagonist in a better light. Aurangzīb directly took care of the punishment of the offenders who killed the judge and now prevents the castration of children. He thus appears in the above excerpt as an alert and attentive ruler. All of this comes before the dismantling of the elephants.

In places like this, I would suggest that it is appropriate to think of Musta'idd Hān's narrative strategy in terms of Adorno's concept *Hinlenkung durch Ablenkung* (to direct through distraction).<sup>766</sup> Adorno used this concept to sum up the essential strategy of the Nazi media, which simultaneously used *Hinlenkens* (direction) (e.g. a detailed description of the defeat in Stalingrad) and *Ablenkung* (distraction) (e.g. through comedies and romances in film and radio) to deflect blame for the inevitable defeat, thus allowing the audience to continue to believe in victory. Although the time, genre, and author are completely different, there is nevertheless a clear parallel. Musta'idd Hān uses the trivial and politically insignificant case of the children as a crucial element of his narrative strategy. On the one hand, it distracts the reader from the protagonist's errors and the decisive events that contributed to the crises of the Mughal Empire. On the other, it directs the recipient through entertainment and excitement to a section which describes the protagonist as the caring patron of all his subordinates.

Let us now look at our author's last narrative technique, which he deployed during the critical event of the removal of the elephants.

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<sup>765</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āsir-i Ālamgīrī*, 39; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsirī Ālamgiri*, 23.

<sup>766</sup> Christoph Jacke, *Hinlenkung durch Ablenkung*, Münster, 2003.

#### 4. DISCIPLINE, AUSTERITY, AND JUSTICE - THE AUTHOR'S CONCEPT OF THE TRUE VALUES OF A JUST MUSLIM RULER

[THE SENTENCE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE REMOVAL OF THE STONE ELEPHANTS AND ONE PAGE AFTER]

Our author attempts to indirectly relativise the destruction of the elephant statues and the following decisions of Aurangzīb with another narrative technique. He does not characterise his protagonist as a nefarious religious fanatic, but neither does he glorify the removal of the elephants as a great deed. Rather, in his fourth narrative technique, Musta'idd Hān endeavours to represent Aurangzīb as a disciplined, spartan, and just king. We have discussed Aurangzīb's disciplined lifestyle in chapter three; however, it is worthwhile repeating why this element is highly relevant when we talk about the experience of contingent events within such a crucial text of Mughal historiography. The fact that our author presents Aurangzīb, the ideal Muslim king, with these attributes is of great importance, as many still argue that such discipline and detestation of luxury were qualities belonging to Protestant, West European sovereigns alone.

In our text, however, something quite different happens. Instead of increasing Aurangzīb's popularity by characterising him as a party-loving, rich, and powerful ruler, such as the Sun King (1638-1715) or other contemporary baroque monarchs, Musta'idd Hān presents us with a much more complex picture of the ideal Muslim ruler. This is shown in the aforementioned story about the wedding of Prince A'zam, which comes just after the story about the removal of the elephants. In this section, which is without parallel in the rest of the text, the author succeeds in representing a clear dualism between the splendour-loving young A'zam and the pious, austere Aurangzīb. The protagonist neither participated in the festivities nor showed any interest in the explicitly highlighted pomp of his son; rather, he deliberately distances himself from the grandeur and prefers the silence of the mosque.

It is thus emphasised that Aurangzīb's decision was made in accordance with Islamic law. This could be used to support the traditional interpretation that our author created a protagonist whose actions were only driven by Islam. In Sarkar's translation, this prohibition seems to clearly demonstrate the turning point towards religious orthodoxy, since the translator entitled the chapter 'Austerity at Court'. However, we seek to go further and keep our author's entire narrative strategy in mind. If we do so, it becomes clear that this decision was a targeted action against A'zam, who had obviously displeased his austere father with his

arrogant ostentation. After all, just two phrases before our author reports the gold prohibition, he notes that the recently married prince was waiting for his father's official visit in a sumptuous style: 'the ground from the fort to the seraglio of the prince was covered with cloth of gold, silver and plain cloth'.

Thus, if we consider the careful way in which Musta'idd Hān constructed this section, the prohibition appears to be a private request from Aurangzīb and the demarcation of the austere protagonist from his lavish milieu: it was thus not a general law of an Islamic tyrant who forbade to all his subjects beauty and gold decoration. It must be noted that the prohibition did not affect the whole court, as golden clothes are still mentioned in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* after the edict.<sup>767</sup> Nor did the decision have a long impact, a fact evinced in the paintings of Aurangzīb and his court from exactly this time.<sup>768</sup> This particular prohibition must be seen as only a temporary and very lax ban, which, interestingly, functions in exactly the same way as the music 'ban', yet another delicate reform performed by an allegedly ultra-orthodox Muslim ruler.

## HALFTIME AND FIRST CONCLUSION

It is at these points in the text that it becomes clear how cautiously we need to approach these crucial passages in so important and controversial a text as the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*. In the past, they have been analysed one-sidedly in order to serve religious and political purposes. So, instead of quoting these initially problematic passages from Sarkar's translation one by one, as has been done so far, we must instead analyse each of them in terms of their deeper meaning and in relation to the entire chapter, the entire text, and the author's specific narrative strategy. In addition, we must always keep in mind the complex techniques of our author in order to understand the text's dichotomy. It will then be possible to fathom the text's second layer and recover our author's original narrative strategy.

In his youth, our author was a witness to all the critical events that we have just analysed (and especially those which are to be found in the next two sections). Then, in 1707, old and at the highest level of the imperial administration, he picked up his pen to write Aurangzīb's official chronicle. He did so as he watched the kingdom being plagued by the numerous crises that had been caused by his former patron: it was now obvious that the protagonist of his chronicle

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<sup>767</sup> See e.g. idem, 107, 118.

<sup>768</sup> See in detail Navina Najat Haidar and Marika Sardar (eds.), *Sultans of Deccan India, 1500 - 1700. Opulence and Fantasy*, New Haven, 2015, 288 ff.

had made mistakes. Only by frequently reminding ourselves of these aspects can we understand that Musta‘idd Ḥān did not welcome Aurangzīb’s religious and political decisions, such as the dismantling of the stone elephants; in fact, he tried to criticise and relativise them as far as he could.

As we shall see in the next sections, the removal of the stone elephants was only a prelude; for Musta‘idd Ḥān, the trickiest obstacles still needed to be overcome. However, instead of blindly worshipping Aurangzīb and attributing each of his following decisions to his faith, Musta‘idd Ḥān, in a prudent manner, tried to relativise the coming temple desecrations and executions of Hindus by putting them into the correct perspective. Let us now look now at the tough sections in the next chapter and how the chronicler avoids the following contingent events.

## SECTION 2

### CONFLICT 1: THE CLOSURE OF THE BRAHMAN SCHOOLS AND THE FIRST DESECRATION OF A HINDU TEMPLE

#### PRELUDE

The coming sections, at first glance, undoubtedly provide the perfect proof for the classical approach to our text, since Musta'idd Hān reports here about the closure of non-Muslim institutions (A) and the destruction of the first Hindu temple (B). Before we start our analysis, we should refer to Richard Eaton's pioneering study, where the following passages are also quoted. After the analysis of the direct and indirect relativisation of these extremely critical points, I will briefly discuss the other temple destructions of the *Ma'āsiri-i 'Ālamgīrī*. Let us start with the first report (A):

It is April 1669 and Musta'idd Hān reports in the twelfth chapter:

(A) The Lord Cherisher of the Faith learnt that in the provinces of Tatta, Multan and especially at Benares, the Brahman misbelievers used to teach their false books in their established schools, and that admirers and students both Hindu and Muslim, used to come from great distances to these misguided men in order to acquire this vile learning. His Majesty, eager to establish Islam, issued orders to the governors of all the provinces to demolish the schools and temples of the infidels and with the utmost urgency put down the teaching and the public practice of the religion of these misbelievers.<sup>769</sup>

Just one month later (only three pages after the above passage), Musta'idd Hān reports about the destruction of the first Hindu temple.

(B) Shikan Hān, was appointed faujdar of Mathura vice Abdun Nabi Hān and Dilir Himmat, son of Bahadur Ruhila, that of Nadarbiir. Brahma Deo Sisodia was appointed to accompany Shikan Hān. Sayyid 'Abdul Wahhab, messenger of the King of Machin, had audience. Salih Bahadur, macebearer, was sent to demolish the temple of Malarna.<sup>770</sup>

Let us begin with quotation (A), which reports the closure of the Hindu institutions. Richard Eaton's work on temple destruction in India greatly helps us here. Source extract (A) is of crucial importance, as it has been interpreted in numerous studies to refer to a general prohibition against all non-Muslim institutions in which Hindus taught their beliefs. Equally,

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<sup>769</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āsiri-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 81; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri 'Ālamgiri*, 51-52.

<sup>770</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āsiri-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 84; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri 'Ālamgiri*, 53.

the assumption that Aurangzīb commanded the destruction of all Hindu temples across the empire derives from this excerpt. Eaton argues the following with regards to to extract (A):

On 8 April 1669, Aurangzīb's court received reports that in Thatta, Multan, and especially in Benares, Brahmans in 'established schools' (*mudāris-i muqarrar*) had been engaged in teaching false books (*kutub-i baṭila*) and that both Hindu and Muslim 'admirers and students' had been traveling over great distances to study the 'ominous sciences' taught by this 'deviant group. We do not know what sort of teaching or 'false books' were involved here, or why both Muslims and Hindus were attracted to them, although these are intriguing questions. What is clear is that the court was primarily concerned, indeed exclusively concerned, with curbing the influence of a certain mode of teaching (*ṭaur-i dars-otadrīs*) within the imperial domain. Far from being, then, a general order for the immediate destruction of all temples in the empire, the order was responding to specific reports of an educational nature and was targeted at investigating those institutions where a certain kind of teaching had been taking place.<sup>771</sup>

In relation to the last sentence of (B), namely that the temples of the infidels should be destroyed, Eaton argues:

The order did not state that schools or places of worship be demolished; rather, it said that they were *subject* to demolition, implying that local authorities were required to make investigations before taking action. More important, the sentence immediately preceding this passage provides the context in which we may find the order's overall intent.<sup>772</sup>

With this factual argumentation, Eaton refutes the assumption that all Hindu temples were ordered to be destroyed throughout the entire kingdom. Let us now continue with our narratological analysis of these sections and try to understand to what extent Musta'idd Ḥān also faced this critical assumption. I will show that Ḥān described the closure of the Brahman schools and the destruction of the temples in a way that was by no means one-dimensional.

#### THE DIRECT RELATIVISATION OF THE CLOSURE OF THE BRAHMAN SCHOOLS (A) AND THE FIRST DESECRATION OF A HINDU TEMPLE (B)

We will firstly focus on the author's language in the two extracts. First of all, it is striking that Musta'idd Ḥān begins his description without using derogatory words against the Hindus. While he does talk about 'misbelievers' and 'misguided men', these sound remarkably sober compared to other contemporary sources and their representations of other religions. This tendency to describe decisive passages with less emotion is even clearer in the second

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<sup>771</sup> Richard Eaton, *Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States*, 265.

<sup>772</sup> *Idem*, 265.

excerpt, where no religious polarisation at all is visible. Here, it seems that Musta‘idd Hān would have preferred to skip the section in which he announces the destruction of the Malarna temple. If it had been the author’s goal to use these two points to celebrate Aurangzīb’s decisions and to taunt non-Muslim religions, this would have been an excellent opportunity to do so: Musta‘idd Hān would have designed this section quite differently.

However, when we conduct a closer inspection, the text’s second layer and the author’s actual intention becomes visible. Musta‘idd Hān expressly tells us within the first excerpt that Muslims and Hindus made a long journey to pray at these places. This explicit emphasis on distance (‘from great distances’), which the author certainly could have skipped, compels us to recognise that it was the author’s aim to emphasise the popularity of these places among Muslims and Hindus alike. Thus, Musta‘idd Hān sought to show the intended recipient of his chronicle that Aurangzīb provoked a large number of his subjects against him with his decision to close this institution. As insignificant as this subordinate clause may appear at first glance, the author uses it to express a specific form of criticism of his protagonist’s decision. In addition, we also witness the text’s function as an agenda for 1710. The criticism suggests to Aurangzīb’s descendant that he had better refrain from such decisions and not offend those Hindus and Muslims who travelled across great distances to holy places.

A deeper function is also conveyed in the underlined phrase in the second excerpt (‘Brahma Deo Sisodia which appointed to accompany Shikan Hān’). Here, the arrangement is of great importance. Immediately before Musta‘idd Hān reported the command to destroy the temple in Malarna, he adds this crucial information about the cooperation between Deo Sisodia and Shikan Hān. This is an amazing fact, since Shikan Hān was one of Aurangzīb’s longtime favourites and enjoyed his confidence. Over the years, the latter occupied the highly respected post of *Mir-Bakshi* (chief paymaster)<sup>773</sup> and received a prominent role in well-known Mughal chronicles such as Khafī Hānān’s *Muntaḥab al Lubāb*.<sup>774</sup>

That our author inserted the successful collaboration between one of the highest Muslim officials and a Hindu nobleman immediately before the order to destroy the Malarna temple immediately catches our attention. Again, we must remember that he could have omitted this emphasis if he had not considered it important enough at this critical juncture in the text. With this phrase, Musta‘idd Hān wants to show that it was possible for Hindu nobles to collaborate at the highest level with Muslim nobles and to pursue their careers at the Mughal court so

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<sup>773</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 288 ff.

<sup>774</sup> Hadi, *Dictionary of Indo-Persian Literature*, 434.

long as they subordinated themselves to the Mughal concept of empire without rebelling against the imperial centre. With this cleverly placed emphasis, the author manages to deemphasise the religious component of the temple destruction. This technique of regularly highlighting successful cooperation and solidarity between Hindus and Muslims became a crucial part of our author's narrative strategy, one which we will discuss in more detail at the end of the third section.

Let us finally compare both critical points in order to see to what extent Musta'idd Hān directly attributed these two important anti-Hindu activities to his protagonist. In the first citation, there is no doubt that it is traced back to the protagonist ('His Majesty, eager to establish Islam, issued orders to the governors of all the provinces to demolish the schools and temples of the infidels'). Here we clearly see that our author had no problems with imputing this command directly to his protagonist. The reason for this is to emphasise that the extract should be seen solely as a *command*, and not an actual report of the destruction of the temple itself, as Eaton convincingly argued before.

In the second excerpt, which merely announces the destruction of the Malarna temple, the case is somewhat different. Here, the destruction cannot be attributed to the direct command of the protagonist, as we read that the '(...) macebearer was sent to demolish the temple of Malarna'. While we should of course assume that the passive description ('was sent') corresponds to the protagonist's command, it still remains interesting that Musta'idd Hān did not rather use this passage to celebrate Aurangzīb's decision. Section B thus strikes us mainly because of its sobriety, since our author could not have told this story in a less spectacular fashion. Finally, we must assume that the temple was not destroyed, as the Malarna temple is not mentioned in Eaton's list of all 80 of the Indian temples demolished by Muslims between 1192 and 1760.<sup>775</sup> However, the fact that Musta'idd Hān directly relativised the action by mentioning the responsible role of the Hindu noblemen Deo Sisodia at the highest level of the Mughal court shows that the command to destroy the temple was, in his opinion, a very controversial decision, which he therefore sought to mitigate. Furthermore, Musta'idd Hān by no means stopped at the direct relativisation of these critical sections. To understand the

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<sup>775</sup> See Harbans Mukhia, who refers in that regard to Eaton's studies: 'Religious zeal must yield to demands of the state. In the end, as recently recorded in Richard Eaton's careful tabulation, some 80 temples were demolished between 1192 and 1760 (15 in Aurangzeb's reign) and he compares this figure with the claim of 60,000 demolitions, advanced rather nonchalantly by "Hindu nationalist" propagandists, although even in that camp professional historians are slightly more moderate' and 'Eaton is legitimately suspicious of figures of temple destruction given in medieval documents, for these would often inflate the numbers to please the zealous emperors'. Mukhia, *The Mughals of India*, 26 and footnote 13 on the same page.



entirety of the strategy behind his relativising anecdotes, we also need to observe the effect of the indirect relativising anecdotes which Musta‘idd Hān placed around these events.

#### THE INDIRECT RELATIVISATION OF THE CLOSURE OF THE BRAHMIN SCHOOLS (A) AND THE FIRST DESECRATION OF A HINDU TEMPLE (B)

Just two sentences after excerpt (A), Musta‘idd Hān placed the following sentence: ‘The band (Naubat), however, played happy strains, as formerly.’<sup>776</sup> What may hardly seem noteworthy at first glance is of great importance for our argument, as Musta‘idd Hān could not have chosen a better setting than a happy group of musicians. By doing so, he skilfully refutes two arguments that are always used to prove Aurangzīb’s fanatical beliefs and religious bigotry. The first is that there was a complete ban on all music at Aurangzīb’s court while the second is that the latter half of Aurangzīb’s reign was predominated by religious persecution.

What is particularly striking here is the fact that Musta‘idd Hān has chosen an extremely interesting group of characters, the musicians. We have already spoken at length about the culturally diverse milieu of *munšīs* from which our author originated. The same can be said of musicians, who embodied the cultural symbiosis between Muslims and Hindus at the highest level. This productive cultural symbiosis in the field of music at the Mughal court gave birth to masterpieces, a tradition that Aurangzīb never broke. This can be seen in the report of the Italian traveller and writer Niccolao Manucci (1639-1717) when he described his stay at Aurangzīb’s court. Manucci seems to be extremely surprised when he writes that 33 of musicians were Hindu women, whose names and responsibilities he lists in detail. In addition, they worked together with their Muslim counterparts without any problems, as the author reports this. Manucci concludes by highlighting the great amount of freedom that Muslim and Hindu women enjoyed in their daily lives.<sup>777</sup>

If we take this into account, we thus recognise the meaning behind this anecdote. It is no coincidence that Musta‘idd Hān places this group of characters at precisely this point: nor is it evidence of his allegedly sloppy historiographical skills. We need to look at the band (*naubat*) as a premodern hub of cultural symbiosis between Muslims and Hindus at the Mughal court. Equally, if we also consider that our author expressly points out that the band happily continued to play as they always did (‘as formerly’), we recognise Musta‘idd Hān’s desired intention and his strategy of relativisation. He wants to show that Hindu artists played music

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<sup>776</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 81.

<sup>777</sup> Bonnie Wade quotes the complete impressive observation of Manucci, see Bonnie Wade, *Imaging Sound. An Ethnomusicological Study of Music, Art and Culture in Mughal India*, Chicago, 1998, 168.

happily at Aurangzīb's court, despite the closure of Brahmin schools and other ongoing anti-Hindu activities. Excerpts (A) and (B) thus by no means describe by a general anti-Hindu tendency at Aurangzīb's court; rather, they should be seen as a demonstration of Mughal *Realpolitik* against rebellious regions and Hindu leaders. With this anecdote immediately following the report on the closure of the Brahmin schools, Musta'idd Hān clearly wants to show that the everyday cooperation between Hindus and Muslims, especially in artistic circles, was in no way impaired.

Furthermore, this sentence must also be understood as an appeal to the primary recipient. When extract (A) tells us that Hindus and Muslims travelled long distances to hear the teachings of the Brahmins, Musta'idd Hān is showing indirectly which decisions could give rise to discontent among the empire's subjects, namely the closure of popular multireligious educational establishments. With the anecdote about the musicians, he wants to show which decisions could strengthen the happiness of the sovereign's subjects, Hindus and Muslims alike.

Let us finally come to the indirect relativisation of the destruction of the Malarna temple (conflict B). Immediately after Musta'idd Hān reports the order to destroy the latter, he describes Aurangzīb's visit to the grave of the popular Shaykh Saifuddin Sirhindi

(...) the Emperor by way of the garden of Haiat-Bakhsh, visited the porter's lodge which was assigned for the residence of the saint Shaikh Saifuddin Sirhindi. After an hour spent in talking with the saint and honouring him, he returned to the palace.<sup>778</sup>

This excerpt would also be very suitable for the traditional interpretation of the source. As this classical narrative goes, Sirhindi's orthodox doctrine fell on fertile ground, convincing Aurangzīb to place the *Shari'a* at the centre of his policies. However, Satis Chandra has demonstrated that the relaunch of the *Shari'a* had less to do with the religious teachings of influential Sufis than previously thought. Rather, Chandra argues, Aurangzīb even expressly requested legal support in Mecca to ban Sirhindi's letters in 1679. Chandra also notes that the usual separation between ultra-orthodox *Naqshpandis* (Sirhindi's order) and the other, more liberal Sufi orders is no longer tenable:

Although the Naqshbandi order is often considered orthodox and the Qāḍiriyya liberal, no such hard and fast distinction can be made (...) Shaikh Abdul Haqq, though belonging to the Qāḍiriyya order, was orthodox in his thinking. After Aurangzīb, Mirza Mazhar Jan-i Janan,

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<sup>778</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āsiri-ālamgīrī*, 84; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri-ālamgīrī*, 53.

belonging to the Naqshbandi order came to the conclusion that the Vedas were the revealed books, and the Hindus therefore possessed the status of the *ahl-i kitab*, and could not be treated like the *kafirs* of Arabia.<sup>779</sup>

In his recent study, Nile Green joins this argument, assessing Sirhindi's influence towards Aurangzib's doctrine of *Realpolitik* to be rather insignificant: 'Awrangzeb's reintroduction of various aspects of Shari'a into Mughal governance has been shown as having more to do with court politics than Sirhindi's influence.'<sup>780</sup>

Chandra's and Green's conclusions thus fit very well with the stylistic representation of Aurangzib's visit to Sirhindi's grave, as Musta'idd Hān obviously sought to avoid a direct connection between religion and politics. The visit to his favourite saint's tomb therefore appears more like a personal decision of the protagonist himself. Thus, the description of this visit clearly shows parallels with the alleged music ban and the prohibition on gold dresses. As these 'bans' did not function as general prohibitions for the entire kingdom, but rather as private renunciations of the protagonist, we should also identify this particular visit as the protagonist's private and spiritual attempt to find personal tranquillity amidst the surrounding chaos. Furthermore, Musta'idd Hān draws a parallel to the mosque, dividing the silence of this religious place and the political wrangling that took place outside it.

In both of the cited passages dealing with the violent crackdown on Hindu institutions, it becomes clear that our author approached them with the utmost caution and deliberation. He experimented with two direct relativisations that significantly contributed another perspective to these contingent events. In addition, our author grouped further anecdotes around them to indirectly relativise them.

Having analysed the direct and indirect relativisations of excerpts A and B, we will now analyse the *Ma'aṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*'s further development of the temple destructions before moving onto the second conflict, namely the first Hindu execution.

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<sup>779</sup> Satish Chandra, *Medieval India. From Sultanate to the Mughals*, New Delhi, 2007, Vol. 2, 433.

<sup>780</sup> Green, *Sufism*. 165.

## EXCURSUS - ON TEMPLE DESTRUCTIONS IN THE *MA'ĀSIR-I 'ĀLAMGĪRĪ* AND THEIR DIRECT AND INDIRECT RELATIVISATION

It was not possible to analyse all of the *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī*'s temple destructions within this chapter, as profitable as this would have been. This is not because of the sheer number of such acts, which, as we will see, was rather low; rather, it is because other contingent events also have to be analysed, such as the execution of rebellious Hindu noblemen. Discussing the reinforcement of the *ḡizya* would also have been a very great opportunity to analyse Musta'idd Hān's narrative strategy in order to understand how he dealt with this highly controversial decisions of his protagonist: however, it had to be skipped for reasons of space.<sup>781</sup>

The aim of the last section was to refer to two source extracts from the same chapter (chapter 12), both which dealt with actions directed against non-Muslim institutions. Based on the analysis of these two events, we were able to realise that the author tried his best to put these sections into an appropriate perspective. With this result, I would like to attempt to summarise the way in which Musta'idd Hān deals with temple destruction into a scheme, thus revealing and increasing our understanding of the author's narrative techniques and his strategies of relativisation. In order to accomplish this, we first break down the total number of temple demolitions and then divide them into two groups.

In total, Musta'idd Hān reports eleven events that include violence against Hindu temples or commands to destroy them.<sup>782</sup> Temple demolitions of the first group are extremely scarce (there are six in the text) and are often only related via a subordinate clause.<sup>783</sup> Thus, there are no detailed and long reports or any aggressive vocabulary against the Hindus to be found. Nor are there any religious justifications of the destruction or praise for Aurangzīb's punitive measures against the Hindus.

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<sup>781</sup> Even though the religious undertone indeed strikes one at first glance, on a closer inspection his six strategies of relativisation clearly work. For the first mentioning of the *ḡizya* on page 174, it is primarily the numerically exceptional Hindu promotions which significantly relativise the protagonist's decision. Additionally, two pages before mentioning the *ḡizya* on page 172, equal promotions are listed, followed by their extension on pages 174, 175, and 182, together with an impressive description of the permanent state of emergency on page 179. For the second mention of the *ḡizya* on page 297, which is done only in a subordinate clause and in a very sober report on its collection (which in fact shows clear parallels to the description of the destruction of Malarna temple), impressive Hindu promotions are again brought forward on pages 278, 283, and 284. Combined with the permanent state of emergency on page 280 and the narrative of the Mughals' discipline on pages 288-29, who fight barbarians on these pages as well as on 295-296, the *ḡizya*, which in the time the author wrote his text certainly appeared to be one of Aurangzeb's major mistakes, solely appears as a minor event of these years that was quickly forgotten.

<sup>782</sup> See Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 84, 88, 95-96 (same temple), 171, 175, 175, 186, 188-189 (same temple), 189, 194, 396. I took this translation froms list in the Index, idem, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 349.

<sup>783</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 84, 88, 171, 188-189 (same temple), 189, 194.

The temple demolitions of the second group are described in much greater detail and are mentioned five times.<sup>784</sup> These come with an aggressive vocabulary, which is either directed against the Rajas or Rajputs, Aurangzīb's direct advocacy of a violent crackdown, or religious legitimisation. However, some crucial aspects of these five temple destructions of the second group, which rank among the most quoted passages in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*,<sup>785</sup> need to be taken into account before reaching judgement. In the first example of this second 'aggressive' group, Musta'idd Hān only uses the ruler's desire to strengthen Islam in his kingdom as a justification for temple destruction once in all five representations.

His Majesty, eager to establish Islam, issued orders to the governors of all the provinces to demolish the schools and temples of the infidels and with the utmost urgency put down the teaching and the public practice of the religion of these misbelievers.<sup>786</sup>

Although two other representations in the second group indeed emphasise the religious dimensions of the temple destructions, as the author speaks in these two sections in a rather denigratory fashion about non-Muslim religions, he does not refer the destruction to the expansion of Islam.<sup>787</sup> This, as said, happens only in one out of the five aggressive mentioned examples, respectively one out of eleven of all the temple sections combines. These two destructions, which emphasise the religious dimensions, I argue,, should be rather understood in the context of punishment for rebellion.

While it is difficult to analyse these five sections of the second, aggressive group briefly, it is interesting to note that one particular event in Udaipur in 1680 (chapter 23) completely falls out of the narrative's frame for all the representations of temple destruction.<sup>788</sup> Here, the Rajput temple guards are described as being high on drugs and monstrous fighting machines (*māḥātur*) who lack any human attributes; thus, the temple's subsequent looting is depicted as a reward for the Mughal soldiers who have earned these treasures by being civilisers and heroes.<sup>789</sup> No less interesting is the fact that the Udaipur setting is ultimately surrounded by outstanding examples of the promotion of Hindus: Hindu generals are shown receiving

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<sup>784</sup> Idem, 81, 95-96, 175, 186, 397.

<sup>785</sup> Norbert Peabody, *Hindu Kingship and Polity in Precolonial India*, New York, 2003, 53; Benjamin Lieberman, *Remaking Identities: God, Nation, and Race in World History*, Lanham, 2013, 149 ff., Catherine Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India*, vol. 4, Cambridge, 1992.

<sup>786</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 81; Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 51; Aurangzeb's direct order is quoted in several recently published studies without any deeper analysis, see e.g., M. A. Khan, *Islamic Jihad. A Legacy of Forced Conversion, Imperialism, and Slavery*, New York, 2009, 198 ff; David Crowe, *War Crimes, Genocide, and Justice. A Global History*, New York, 2014, 64.

<sup>787</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 115 and 175.

<sup>788</sup> Idem, 186.

<sup>789</sup> Idem, 175.

impressive gifts just as the author begins to describe the aforementioned anti-Hindu campaign.<sup>790</sup> Within this chapter, we also witness a dramatic representation of the permanent state of emergency, in which Aurangzīb and his army once again are depicted as the narrative's victims; thus, it is evident that their actions must be explained from this perspective.<sup>791</sup> In this context, Aurangzīb's opponents are recurrently described as barbarians, which allows the text to portray the protagonist and his entourage as civilisers in contrast to the drug-addled Rajupts.<sup>792</sup> And, finally, Musta'idd Hān also mentions the Mughals' strong work ethic and sense of discipline in this chapter,<sup>793</sup> the importance of structure, organisation, and speed,<sup>794</sup> peace-loving and well-educated nobles,<sup>795</sup> and the permanent state of emergency<sup>796</sup> alongside the temple destruction.

Prior to this, chapter 22 contains a pragmatic description of the destruction of the temples of the first group at the beginning,<sup>797</sup> as well as a detailed and seemingly aggressive description.<sup>798</sup> Again, Musta'idd Hān skilfully uses the closure, reporting that Aurangzīb donated 5,000 rupees for the grave of Mu'īn ad-Dīn Čišī (1141-1236), the prominent sheikh of the Čišīyya order, at the chapter's end.<sup>799</sup> While this may, at first glance, seem like another one of Musta'idd Hān's trivial anecdotes, it actually has a much deeper meaning and function. This is because Mu'īn ad-Dīn Čišī's teachings strongly influenced the thinking of the influential Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism (died 1539). The Čišīyya defined religion as a service to humanity: 'They invited their followers to develop river-like generosity, sun-like affection, and earth-like hospitality.'<sup>800</sup> To implement these moral demands, they built *Hānaqas* all over India, which functioned as community centres. In these *Hānaqas*, the Čišīyya welcomed everyone, regardless of faith, race, or caste, and offered food, shelter, spiritual guidance, psychological support, and advice. Exemplary egalitarian communities arose which were based on a tolerant and humane concept of Islam. That Musta'idd Hān closed this chapter, which includes one of the most prolific anti-Hindu campaigns,<sup>801</sup> with the visit of his protagonist to this particular setting must be

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<sup>790</sup> Idem, 182.

<sup>791</sup> Idem, 179-181.

<sup>792</sup> Idem, 180.

<sup>793</sup> Idem, 183, 187, 189.

<sup>794</sup> Idem, 187.

<sup>795</sup> Ibid.

<sup>796</sup> Idem, 192, 193.

<sup>797</sup> Idem, 171.

<sup>798</sup> Idem, 175.

<sup>799</sup> Idem, 181.

<sup>800</sup> Khaliq Nizami, *Historical Studies, vol. 2: On Islamic History and Culture*, New Delhi, 1995, 35.

<sup>801</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āşir-i Ālamgīrī*, 175.

considered alongside the initial demolition of the temple. Musta‘idd Ḥān also surrounds these two sections with one of the most impressive examples of Hindu promotions<sup>802</sup> and a detailed description of the Mughals’ suffering in their fight against the barbarians.<sup>803</sup>

Musta‘idd Ḥān’s direct and indirect relativisations also appear in another apparently aggressive report about temple destructions.<sup>804</sup> While these daunting descriptions seem to offer little space for alternative interpretations, on closer inspection it is clear that Aurangzīb is being portrayed as the instrument of vengeance for the death of Abū l-Faḍl, which I will discuss in more detail below. This is remarkable, since the latter strove at the highest level of government for a dialogue with the Hindus and served as the chief ideologist for Akbar’s *dīn-i l-lāhi*.

Four particular sections utterly stand out among the sections dealing with temple destruction because of the sheer number of descretations mentioned.<sup>805</sup> Here, once more Richard Eaton’s factual argumentation helps us considerably to cast a different perspective on these events. Eaton argues that we must be very careful when dealing with the reported numbers of temple destructions, as these were often greatly exaggerated in order to praise the achievements of the rulers involved.<sup>806</sup> In addition to Eaton’s argument, we also need to understand these specific passages from the perspective of multiple authorship; more precisely, we should remind ourselves that the strictly conservative ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān, patron of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, must have had an influence on the way in which an appropriate image of Aurangzīb was designed. In regards to the discussions of chapters 22 and 23, the text’s dichotomy becomes eminently clear, which means we must be cautious when approaching these high numbers.

#### END OF EXCURSUS

The temple destructions described in the text are in the minority, and it is notable that only one out of eleven events is directly connected with the spread of Islam. The majority of the temple destructions, six of them, are described in remarkably laconic terms, and no heroic qualities are attributed to the actions.

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<sup>802</sup> Idem, 171-172, 174, 175.

<sup>803</sup> Idem, 179-180.

<sup>804</sup> Idem, 95-96.

<sup>805</sup> Idem, 188, 189, 194, 396.

<sup>806</sup> See Eaton, *Temple Desecrations and Indo-Muslim States*, 257, 281.

In actual fact, it seems as if Musta‘idd Hān would have preferred to skip these sections: perhaps he only added them into his text because his patron was the proponent of an ultra-Sunni policy. Furthermore, if we look beyond these representations, it becomes clear that the author utilised numerous direct and indirect anecdotes to relativise each of the eleven temple destructions. These anecdotes significantly help to relativise the temple destructions and make it clear that, for Musta‘idd Hān, these events were rather marginal in Aurangzīb’s reign. The vast majority of these incidents must be primarily interpreted as *Realpolitik*: the author explicitly avoids connecting them with religious legitimacy and instead sees them as the punishment of those rebellious Hindu leaders who disrupted the empire’s peace.<sup>807</sup>

It should therefore be established that Musta‘idd Hān did not consider these temple demolitions as praise worthy or important enough to justify lengthy and detailed descriptions. Nor did he, with one exception, root such events in Islam.<sup>808</sup> Rather, the author tried to embed ten of the eleven temple destructions amidst fighting and riots, thereby showing that they needed to be understood within a context of widespread violence. He did so by either describing the temple guards as drugged monsters bereft of humanity or, as we will shortly show, by portraying Aurangzīb as the avenger of Abū l-Faḍl, a lifelong fighter for Hindu-Muslim dialogue and collaboration.

If we once again recall the fact that the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* has been mainly used to prove Aurangzīb’s alleged hatred of Hindus, his religious fanaticism, and his will to destroy all of the temples in the kingdom, it becomes obvious why we must understand Musta‘idd Hān’s actual intention and narrative strategy as a Muslim intellectual in early eighteenth-century Mughal India. Our author did not celebrate these seemingly frightening deeds as the heroic actions of a just Muslim ruler. Rather, he sought to explain them meaningfully and separated them from religious dimensions; in doing so, he relativised them. This must have been extremely difficult for the official chronicler of such a controversial ruler.

Let us now move on to discussing the second section. Here, the conflicts increase significantly. The text no longer deals with anonymous temple and school facilities being destroyed or closed but instead with the execution of Hindus.

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<sup>807</sup> With this in mind, I also classified the destruction of the temple on page 173 as a sober and non-aggressive representation. Although Musta‘idd Hān shortly reports that Darab Hān ‘slew three hundred misbelievers’, this section does not include any religiously hostile vocabulary. The action is reported very briefly and should rather be seen as a targeted action against the rebellious Rajputs of Hāndela.

<sup>808</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 81.



The first occurs in chapter 12 and we are immediately treated to one of the ways in which Musta‘idd Hān sought to relativise apparently anti-Hindu actions: with the description of the annual promotion of loyal Hindu nobles.

## CONFLICT 2: THE HINDU EXECUTION<sup>809</sup>

### THE DIRECT RELATIVISATION

It is midsummer in 1669, in the twelfth chapter, and Musta‘idd Hān writes:

It was reported that the wandering Hindu saint, Uddhav Bairagi, was confined in the *chabutra* of the police station in punishment for his seducing men to false beliefs, and that two Rajputs who were his disciples used to visit Qazi ‘Abūl Mukaram, son of Qazi ‘Abdul Wahhab, for the purpose of trying to get him released, and that finding an opportunity they had fatally stabbed him on the way with daggers. The Emperor ordered all the three (Hindus) to be executed. Raghunath Singh Sisodia left the Rami, joined the Emperor, was created a hazari (300 tr.), and presented with a dagger worth 1,000 rupees.<sup>810</sup>

To begin with, I will focus on Musta‘idd Hān’s direct relativisation. First of all, it is striking that the author clearly proceeds in much the same way as he did in the second temple destruction described above. Here, the successful cooperation between the high Hindu and Muslim nobles Brahma Deo Sisodia and Shikan was highlighted in the immediate context of temple demolitions. We can now see the same in the present section, as our author steps a little further by highlighting the high reward given to Raghunath Singh Sisodia immediately after the execution. In this way, the author reverses the formerly stable pathos of distance between the Hindu characters and the protagonist. This is the beginning of the fifth point of Musta‘idd Hān’s strategy of relativisation, and can be considered the joker in the author’s literary pack of cards.

### THE AUTHOR’S JOKER: THE PROMOTION OF LOYAL HINDU NOBLES

By far the most important strategy of relativisation in Musta‘idd Hān’s text is the annual promotion of Hindu noblemen. The author places these sections in direct connection with an anti-Hindu action in order to relativise the latter.

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<sup>809</sup> The violent portrayals of the deaths of insurgents could have been another field of investigation; however, this could not be researched due to lack of time (page 186 provides a very dramatic example of these specific descriptions). However, Musta‘idd Hān’s six strategies of relativisation can also be applied without problems to these representations.

<sup>810</sup> Musta‘idd Hān, *Ma’āziri-ī ‘Ālamgīrī*, 84-85; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma’āziri ‘Ālamgiri*, 53-54.

In this way, Musta‘idd Ḥān skilfully avoids assigning a religious dimension to punitive measures against non-Muslims. By showing repeatedly that religion was not an obstacle when it came to gaining access to the ruler and starting a successful career at the Mughal court, the temple destructions, the suppression of rebellions, and the executions of non-Muslims appear as a form of pure *Realpolitik*.

It is also striking that the promotion of Hindus<sup>811</sup> in the second part of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* clearly outweighs the number of executions of rebellious Hindus,<sup>812</sup> temple destructions,<sup>813</sup> and drastic descriptions of the fight against the infidels (28 to 21). If we add discussions of direct cooperation of Hindus and Muslims (the sixth strategy of relativisation, which will be discussed in the fourth section), the proportion becomes even more striking (33 to 21).

These annual Hindu promotions serve the author in the following four ways:

- Pushing aside the pathos of distance between Hindus and their Muslim king.
- Aurangzīb and his loyal Hindus appear in public as reliable allies.
- To allow for a focus on loyalty, discipline, and reliability above all else. This is especially evident when Hindu noblemen are promoted further than their Muslim colleagues. These impressive and very detailed descriptions should be characterised as the author’s joker, especially when they appear after an anti-Hindu campaign.<sup>814</sup>
- To put the ruler’s grace into the foreground. This is especially the case when former insurgents regained their old rank or increased their position at the court.<sup>815</sup>

Emphasising the promotion of a Hindu nobleman was a particularly effective strategy if the individual in question had previously rebelled against the imperial centre. An interesting example can be found in 1681. To understand this section, it is important to note that the revolt of Aurangzīb’s second son, Mohammad Akbar (1657-1706), took place in the same year. The latter legitimised the rebellion against his father and his alliance with the Rajputs with the fact that he wanted to abolish the *ḡizya* and restore the religious conditions that had been prevalent in the time of Akbar. It is in this context that the following description of forgiveness and gift-giving towards the Hindus should be understood: the decision to restore

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<sup>811</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 39, 141, 157, 182, 203, 212, copland, 221, 241, 249, 251, 245-255, 267-277, 284, 350, 360, 396, 404, 405, 470, 473, 482, 495, 512.

<sup>812</sup> Idem, 167, 195, 296.

<sup>813</sup> Idem, 84, 88, 95-96, 171, 173, 175, 186, 188, 189, 194, 397.

<sup>814</sup> See e.g. idem, 167, 171-172, 208, especially 305-307, 334-335, 340.

<sup>815</sup> See e.g. idem, 498.

the *ġizya* was by no means based on Aurangzīb's hatred of Hindus, but primarily on political reasons and the need to finance the campaigns in the Deccan. Finally, within this section, we can clearly recognise that the text was supposed to serve as an agenda for Prince Muḥammad A'zam, who indeed appears at the end of this passage. He is depicted as the true hero of the passage, since he mediates between the Hindus and Aurangzīb in such a way that allows the conflict to come to a happy end. The author uses the conflict to make the intended recipient of his text the central character in an anecdote containing the most detailed description of a Hindu promotion. Musta'idd Ḥān writes:

The Rana had fled from his country and abode and received severe chastisement from the imperial army. The thousand-year home of the desert rat was overturned by the hoofs of the horses of the imperialists. He fled as far as his frontier, and then, when his powers were exhausted and no resource was left save to beg for quarter, he begged Prince Muḥammad 'A'zam to intercede for him (...) The prince graciously ordered him to sit on the left side and presented him with a robe, a jewelled sword, a dagger with phulkaiaara, a horse with gold saz, and an elephant with silver saz. His title of Rana was restored and he was created a &-hazari (same tr.) and then permitted to return. His followers received 100 robes, ten jewelled daggers and forty horses. When the Rana went to the house of Dilir Ḥān, the Ḥān on his part sent men to welcome him: nine thousand of cloth, one jewelled sword, a shield with jewelled gul, a spear carved in relief, nine horses and one elephant were presented to him; and three cloths, a jewelled dagger, a jewelled arsi, a jewelled armlet (bazuband) and two horses to the son of the Rana.<sup>816</sup>

Let us return to the section that describes the execution of rebellious Hindus. Here, we must consider a problem with Sarkar's translation that could lead to misinterpretation. In his version, Sarkar places, in parentheses, a description which identifies the executed as Hindus. However, there are no such parenthesis in either the edited version<sup>817</sup> or the original manuscript. If the edited version had missed the more detailed description from the manuscript, Sarkar would have pointed it out as a mistake the way he did on other occasions.<sup>818</sup> Instead, Musta'idd Ḥān just reports the execution of *three people*. While it is clear that the author is definitely referring to Rajputs, we must pay careful attention to how Musta'idd Ḥān narrated this vitally important section. While Sarkar uses this section to emphasise to Aurangzīb's alleged hatred of Hindus, the original text evidently has a different purpose. Once again, the executions would have been the perfect opportunity for the author to

<sup>816</sup> Idem, 207-209; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 127-128.

<sup>817</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āsiri-i Ālamgīrī*, 84-85.

<sup>818</sup> See Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 54.

use a much more belicose vocabulary and to indict the murderers of Qazi 'Abūl Mukaram had his intention been to portray Aurangzīb as a viciously fanatical Muslim ruler. However, the text demonstrates that Musta'idd Ḥān sought to keep the issue of religion separate from these conflicts.

This argument is particularly valid in this case when we consider the function of the murdered Qāḍī and the dignity of his office, especially in urban centres '(...) where the qāḍī assumed extensive judicial responsibility(...)'.<sup>819</sup> Together with other high officials, a Qāḍī represented Mughal sovereignty on the ground;<sup>820</sup> thus, an attempt on his life was the same as an attack on the life of the ruler himself. Severe retribution for the murders was therefore completely legitimate from the perspective of the imperial centre. In numerous places throughout the text, Musta'idd Ḥān reported that Aurangzīb awarded the respective convict clemency;<sup>821</sup> however, such an act would certainly have been interpreted as weakness given the severity of this particular crime.

It is therefore interesting that the end of chapter 12, which includes the above-quoted execution, also provides a detailed instance of Aurangzīb offering forgiveness to the descendants of the rebel leader Gokla Jat. We can therefore hold that, while Uddhav Bairagi was imprisoned because of his allegedly false teachings, the subsequent execution of the latter and his two disciples had nothing to do with the religious factor; rather, it was punishment for the murder of a local judge.

We thus recognise that Musta'idd Ḥān intersperses this section with two direct relativisations (the alliance of Raghunath Singh Sisodia with Aurangzīb and the noticeable effort to keep the execution free of religious overtones). It follows another interesting anecdote that, due to its length, will be analysed only briefly. It nevertheless deserves our attention, as it is a crucial part of Musta'idd Ḥān's narrative strategy of indirect relativisation.

#### THE INDIRECT RELATIVISATION: THE HINDU EXECUTION

More than any other anecdote, Hussayn Pashah's visit in the summer of 1669 helps our author to relativise the execution of Hindus. Again, we see here Musta'idd Ḥān's *Hinlenkung durch Ablenkung* very clearly. Immediately after the execution of the insurgent Hindus, a social occasion of the highest importance took place. Ḥusain Pāšā, formerly the powerful governor of Basra, came into conflict with the imperial centre in Istanbul and was forced into exile.

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<sup>819</sup> Wael Hallaq, *Sharī'a. Theory, Practice, Transformations*, Cambridge, 2009, 209.

<sup>820</sup> Ibid.

<sup>821</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āzīr-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 19, 28, 61, 111, 348, 411, 412.

After an unhappy time in Iran, he finally decided, together with his retinue and family, to ask Aurangzīb for asylum. This, as our author says, was granted with fully courtly pomp.

By making this anecdote last so long (it takes up more than three pages),<sup>822</sup> the recipient is distracted from the conflict with the Hindus. Thus, the author directs the recipient's attention to the protagonist's proper role and character (namely, his omnipotence and benevolence) and entices the gaze away from the violent crackdowns against the Hindus. This anecdote is also used to show Aurangzīb and his entire entourage as perfect hosts: as everything for the visit is planned down to the smallest detail. At Aurangzīb's request, the guards of the salt market receive the pasha first, thus emphasising the function of salt as an important symbol of loyalty.<sup>823</sup> Then, Aurangzīb's highest-ranking nobles assist the guest, who is then finally received by the emperor in person.

It is therefore certainly no coincidence that we witness the most peaceful anecdote of the beginning of the second half of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* right after the soberly narrated Hindu execution. Once the conflicts against the Hindus begin to increase, the author uses decisive and effective anecdotes, such as Husain Pasha's visit, to offer a peaceful counterpoint to the violent character of the more contingent events. We thus see, that these anecdotes were by no means historically unimportant; rather, they functioned as a core element of Musta'idd Ḥān's narrative strategy. This particular anecdote depicts Aurangzīb as the undisputed ruler of the kingdom, offering asylum to any person seeking his help. Furthermore, this indirect relativisation serves the author as a way of transitioning to the next conflict, which includes a temple demolition. When the description of this conflict is read in conjunction with the visit of the Ottoman noble, the relativising anecdote gains its full effect. By portraying Aurangzīb and his entourage as perfect hosts anxious to provide assistance to the asylum seekers, it is easier to depict them as victims in the next section.

In the first section, institutions were closed and orders were given for their destruction; in the second, we read about executed Hindus. Now, in the third, Musta'idd Ḥān skilfully combines and relativises both kinds of negative incident in a dramatic way.

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<sup>822</sup> Idem, 85-87.

<sup>823</sup> Gijs Kruijtzer, *Xenophobia in Seventeenth-century India*, Leiden 2009.

### CONFLICT 3: TWO OPEN SWORD FIGHTS NEXT TO THE EMPEROR

#### THE DIRECT RELATIVISATION

We now enter the autumn of 1669 in chapter 12, and Musta‘idd Ḥān writes:

(A) It was reported that, according to the Emperor’s command, his officers had demolished the temple of Viswanath at Kashi (...) (B) Jamad. A., Ekkataz Ḥān and Giridhardas Sisodia had a fight in the course of their watch before the Lahore gate. The Hindu went to hell and the Ḥān received five wounds, and among his clientele (birddari) some Mughals were wounded. (...) (It appeared that) after the Emperor had sat down in the audience hall, Multafat Ḥān, Himmat Ḥān, and Ruhullah Ḥān were conversing together, when Dildar, son of Ulfat Ḥān (Muḥammad Tahir) and grandson of Daulat Ḥān, who bore ill will to Multafat Ḥān, suddenly struck his sword on the back of the Ḥān with both his hands. As soon as he faced round, the assailant struck three other blows. Multafat Ḥān received them on his shield, and thrust at him with his sword. Meantime Himmat Ḥān struck at him with his sword, Fazlullah Ḥān, Mir-Tuzuk hit him on the head with a rod. Getting perplexed and receiving blows with sticks from Bahramand Ḥān and others, the assailant ran up to the marble stool. Jamil Beg Khawas who used to fan the Emperor with a chamar, stabbed him in the armpit with a dagger. He was despatched, and his corpse was taken up and thrown outside. The men of the left hand group (*dangal-i-chap*) and the slaves of that day’s guard, both high and low, were degraded in rank.<sup>824</sup>

The destruction of the Viswanath Temple mentioned in the first sentence is used in many popular works to prove Aurangzīb’s bigotry. Thus it is important to examine how our author deals with this critical event.<sup>825</sup>

First of all, it is indeed striking that no hateful vocabulary is used against the Hindus and their temple sites, although this would have been an excellent opportunity for such polemical language. Furthermore, the incident is by no means described as a heroic act. Rather, we witness Musta‘idd Ḥān’s adopt a statesmanlike tone when dealing with these specific anti-Hindu sections. In an extremely laconic fashion, the author gives a quick description of the event, once again making it seem that he would have preferred to ignore the matter. This temple desecration is thus in sharp contrast with the more verbose story of the assassination of Multafat Ḥān, which we will discuss below.

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<sup>824</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma’āsiri-ī ‘Ālamgīrī*, 88-89; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma’āsiri-ī Ālamgīrī*, 55-56.

<sup>825</sup> See e.g., Samaren Roy, *The Bengalees. Glimpses of History and Culture*, New Delhi, 1999, 71; Abraham Eraly, *Emperors of the Peacock Throne*, London, 2004, 401.

The reason for this remarkably concise statement lies in the fact that, for the author, the causes of the demolition are to be found in the ruler's *Realpolitik*, and not in religious thinking. For Musta'idd Hān, the destruction of the Visvanath Temple was a military reprisal that needed no further elaboration, let alone any kind of homage. Eaton argues similarly:

In 1669, there arose a rebellion in Benares among landholders, some of whom were suspected of having helped Shivaji, who was Aurangzīb's archenemy, escape from imperial detention. It was also believed that Shivaji's escape had been initially facilitated by Jai Singh, the great-grandson of Raja Man Singh, who almost certainly built Benares's great Vishvanath temple. It was against this background that the emperor ordered the destruction of that temple in September 1669.<sup>826</sup>

However, the reason for the brevity of the description of the temple demolition lies not only in the fact that the imperial centre perceived it as pragmatic political action. 40 years after this event took place, our author, together with those who shared his intellectual environment, must have certainly recognised that these specific actions significantly contributed to rebellions that existed from 1707 onwards. The extent to which Musta'idd Hān was aware of this becomes evident when we contrast the striking brevity of the destruction of the temple (A) and the two remarkably detailed combat scenes (B), which are written with excitement and drama hitherto unseen in the text. As Musta'idd Hān connected this scene, which stands out in terms of its topic, style, and length from the rest of the text, directly to the destruction of the Vishvanath Temple, we need to analyse it in more detail

At first sight, the two combat scenes have nothing to do with the previous event. The classic interpretation generally argues that they are historically unimportant and only prove Musta'idd Hān's inadequacy as a historian. However, on closer inspection, it is clear how thoughtfully the author arranged these anecdotes. I argue that these anecdotes are crucial to understanding how and why Musta'idd Hān glossed over the contingent temple demolition, since it is here that we can situate the author as a writer working within a particular historical context. If we seek to answer the question of how our author, as a member of the Muslim intelligentsia in early eighteenth-century Mughal India, handled the destruction of temples, these specific anecdotes are of the utmost importance.

Let us start with the first fight. Here, the Hindu noblemen Giridhardas Sisodia fights alone against numerous Mughals. Although he is ultimately killed, it is still striking that the author indirectly emphasises the Hindu's skill and courage. Not only does the Hān receive five

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<sup>826</sup> Eaton, *Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States*, 264.

wounds, but Giridhardas Sisodia also struggles until the end against the Hān and the latter's entourage. The setting which Musta'idd Hān has chosen for this fight is also crucial. The Lahore gate symbolises that the Hindu threat has come right up to the gates of Mughal power ('before the Lahore gate'). Musta'idd Hān briefly relates the destruction of a temple immediately before telling this dramatic story of a single Hindu fighting against a gang of Mughals because he wants to show that the Hindu threat had to be taken seriously: they were clearly, in his estimation, excellent fighters (the five wounds and the clear numerical advantage of the Mughals emphasise this) and thus dangerous potential enemies.

It is precisely in this context that the subsequent narrative of a fight between two Mughals must be understood. The first fight was repelled at the gates of the Mughal power; however, the second fight is placed in the immediate vicinity of the protagonist, thus transferring the permanent state of emergency right into the imperial centre. The tension is increased significantly and the dry report of the temple destruction is quickly forgotten.<sup>827</sup> Musta'idd Hān relates in detail the fluctuating course of combat until it eventually ends with the aggressor's death. This enables the author to distract the recipient completely the destruction of the Vishwanath temple. Finally, our author emphasises the mildness of the protagonist once again. Since the attacker could not be taken down by the bodyguard and was only defeated by the valour of the nobles who had been immediately present, Aurangzīb demoted the bodyguard for their failure but refrained from any further punishment.

Before we will discuss the last section, the author's indirect relativisation also needs to be quickly analysed. To this end, we will concentrate on three anecdotes that adjoin the destruction of the Vishvanath temple. This is where our author draws on the previously tested narrative strategy of describing the permanent state of emergency, Aurangzīb's tolerance towards non-orthodox Sufi movements, and his own personal achievements and influence at court. When all of these techniques are combined, they ultimately distract the recipient from the temple destruction.

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<sup>827</sup> I refer primarily to Wenzel, *Zur Analyse der Spannung*.



## THE INDIRECT RELATIVISATION OF THE SWORD FIGHTS

It is late autumn of 1669 and we are still in the twelfth chapter. Musta‘idd Ḥān writes:

(...) It was learnt that when four gharis of the night had passed, a star in the east shot out of the sky and fell towards the west, lighting up houses, as with moonlight, and then a sound like the rumbling of thunder was heard.<sup>828</sup>

We have already mentioned the fact that Musta‘idd Ḥān describes the permanent state of emergency in ever more complex and threatening terms throughout in the second half of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*: this gloomy episode is a very good example. Even though we do not witness any victims among civilians, Musta‘idd Ḥān still designed a very menacing backdrop. Nothing is said about the causes and outcome of the disaster or whether anyone was hurt. In terms of Musta‘idd Ḥān’s narrative strategy, it is important to note that the tension felt by the recipient is increased considerably by such anecdotes. Furthermore, these excerpts serve to distract the reader from the sombre descriptions of temple destructions. The present anecdote about threatening nature must be read in direct connection with the following relativisation, as they complement each other perfectly: uncertainty and threat on the one hand, security and tranquillity on the other. Two weeks after the appearance of the threatening star, Musta‘idd Ḥān writes:

The Emperor visited the tombs of Humāyūn, Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia, and Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki Tushi. Rewards in cash were given to the attendants of the three shrines and they showed the sacred relics.<sup>829</sup>

After the fear and uncertainty of the first anecdote, this religious setting functions as a spiritual retreat for the protagonist. The visit to the second tomb is of particular importance. Nizām ad-Dīn Auliya’ (1238-1325) was one of the most famous Sufi saints of the Čišṭiyya order in India. His popular grave, the Nizām ad-Dīn, lies in the heart of Old Delhi and is still frequently visited by Muslims, Christians, and Hindus. In regards to the Čišṭiyya’s effect on society and its characteristics, Nile Green writes:

Shaping their Indian environment no less than they were shaped by it, the Chisti brotherhood presented their path as a distinct brand of Sufism with characteristics that marked it as separate from the other brotherhoods that entered India. In this way, they cultivated an association with

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<sup>828</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 89; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma‘āṣiri Ālamgiri*, 56.

<sup>829</sup> Musta‘idd Ḥān, *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 90; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma‘āṣiri Ālamgiri*, 56.

music, an antipathy for royal associations and an openness for interaction with Hindus that made their brotherhood attractive to some Muslims in India and unattractive to others.<sup>830</sup>

With the report on the visit of the tomb, our author informed the recipients of his text that even Aurangzīb could not fully escape Nizām ad-Dīn's charisma. This being said, it is interesting to see that Aurangzīb rewards the guardians of the relics and pays them respect. This is certainly at odds with the traditional interpretation's argument that Aurangzīb was hostile towards the Čištiyya order, since they were the opponents of Aurangzīb's personal favourite, Naqšbandīs. We need to dig deeper for the true meaning of this phrase. It is striking that our author creates a protagonist who, after having completed the mandatory visit to the grave of the founding fathers of his dynasty, pays homage to the grave of a *Šūfī* who was a leading light in the dialogue between Hindus and Muslims.

Finally, let us compare this section with the anecdote about the closure of the Brahmin school. This report clearly demonstrated that Aurangzīb had the power to take action against non-Muslim institutions, despite their popularity. With regards to the anecdote, where Aurangzīb pays respect to the Čištiyya order, Musta'idd Hān clearly could have skipped this representation: he must therefore have been convinced that it was necessary to mention this event in exactly this way in Aurangzīb's official chronicle. In other words, if Musta'idd Hān had wanted to depict his protagonist as an ultra-orthodox ruler, this would have been yet another excellent moment to taunt syncretic movements within Islam, such as the Čištiyya, and to portray the actions of the ruler against their institutions heroically. However, this is decidedly not the case here: once again, it is necessary to discuss the text's function as a mirror for Bahādur Šāh.

The last anecdote, finally, is the above discussed and extraordinary self-stylisation of the author's person and his colleague in the *munšī*'s melon garden. This successfully ends the author's strategy of relativising the destruction of the Vishwanath temple in chapter twelve.

We can now see that a fresh look at the source delivers new results and that Musta'idd Hān appears in a new light. We encounter a text that was not solely designed to blindly celebrate and glorify Aurangzīb's anti-Hindu actions. Rather, we find an author who knew how to report critically about the past, even in the official record of this powerful ruler. Furthermore, it is precisely in these allegedly unhistorical (and thus irrelevant) anecdotes that the actual author's intention can be identified. Once we free ourselves from the classical interpretation

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<sup>830</sup> Green, *Sufism*, 90.

and go beyond its historical and factual sections, we gain a much larger field of interpretation. The current devaluation of these sections ('in many places [the *Ma'āsiri-i 'Ālamgīrī*] reads like a dry list of official postings and promotions as in our Government Gazettes')<sup>831</sup> is therefore completely inaccurate. With this intermediate result, we will now enter into the fourth and final section to have a detailed look at our author's direct and indirect strategies of relativisation.

#### CONFLICT 4: THE REBELLION OF THE PEASANTS AND THE BURNING WIVES OF THE DEFEATED

##### THE DIRECT RELATIVISATION

We are now approaching the end of the twelfth chapter. However, this certainly does not mean the end of conflict. Our author knew how to maintain the tension for his recipients when he announced the final two major conflicts of the year. It is now the winter of 1669: Aurangzīb ordered that imperial tents be set up near the Jamuna River. Musta'idd Ḥān thus gives his protagonist some rest. However, just as the protagonist decides to go on a hunt (let us remember that this is the protagonist's only pleasure throughout the narrative), Musta'idd Ḥān, completely unexpectedly, lets the permanent state of emergency drastically break into the plot. In the middle of his hunting, Aurangzīb experiences:

(...) the circumstances of the rebellion in the villages (...) By order of the Emperor Hasan 'Ali Ḥān attacked them. They fought up to noon with bows and muskets; and then, being unable to resist any longer, many of them performed the jauhar of their women, and rushed to fight at close quarters; many of the imperialists including the companions of Hasan 'Ali Ḥān attained martyrdom, while 300 of the infidels went to hell and 250 persons, male and female, were made prisoners.<sup>832</sup>

Let us start with the direct relativisation. Once again, the author shatters the peace of the imperial centre with an external threat: Aurangzīb and his entourage are described as persecuted victims who act in self-defence. The direct relativisation thus lies in the description that no other choice remained for the imperial troops but to take up arms and put down the rebellion. In this context, we witness that the Mughal forces are civilisers, since the real barbarities are committed by Aurangzīb's enemies. Musta'idd Ḥān could not have underscored this contrast more strongly. The protagonist explicitly commanded the

<sup>831</sup> Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, vi.

<sup>832</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āsiri-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 92; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āsiri Ālamgiri*, 57.

construction of the tents in order to allow for his followers to recover, while the opponents are described as a wild and faceless mass.

Similar contrasting descriptions are used throughout the second half of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, increasing specifically when the author starts describing the numerous castle sieges in the Deccan since the twenty-fifth year of Aurangzīb's reign in 1682.<sup>833</sup> As the text proceeds, Musta'idd Ḥān designates individual Mughals as heroes, whereas their opponents only appear as a frightening and wild mass. Phrases which mention that the nobles and soldiers all '(...) boldly stood their ground and heroically died'<sup>834</sup> are frequently used: the noun 'hero' is applied to Mughal fighters and their achievements more than 40 times.<sup>835</sup>

The emergence of the individual heroic Mughal fighter is closely related to discipline and honour. Through this interplay between the Mughals' individual bravery and discipline and the cowardly and barbaric masses of their enemies, Musta'idd Ḥān describes the Mughals as civilisers of India. Our author highlights this by attributing verbs of motion (to march, to decamp, running)<sup>836</sup> to the Mughals and denying them to enemies who wait passively behind their walls.<sup>837</sup> This part of his narrative strategy can be summed up as a contrast between the movement, courage, and discipline of the Mughals, and the passivity, cowardice, and barbarism of the empire's enemies.<sup>838</sup> To further emphasise the latter's backwardness and savagery, he places these enemies primarily in a nocturnal setting.<sup>839</sup> Barbarism comes particularly into play in the last quotation. Although we learn nothing about the uprising's actual origins, the story ends with the report that the defeated insurgents committed *Jauhar* against their wives.

The Hindu ritual killing of women and children (*Jauhar*) at the moment of defeat in order to escape the threat of slavery fascinated and shocked Muslim chroniclers from the very beginning.<sup>840</sup> They often reported it with a striking admiration for the honour of the vanquished.<sup>841</sup> This was mainly because the women, often voluntarily, were throwing themselves into the fire along with their children, as was documented in the most popular and

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<sup>833</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 212 f.

<sup>834</sup> Idem, 144-145.

<sup>835</sup> Idem, e.g. 116, 129, 145, 198, 262, 281, 289, 291, 300, 312.

<sup>836</sup> Idem, e.g. 16, 17, 18, 29, 44, 46, 199, 310, 319, 335, 338, 342.

<sup>837</sup> Idem, e.g. 415.

<sup>838</sup> Chapter 46 serves as a very good example. Here, all these aspects of Musta'idd Ḥān's specific narrative strategy of the permanent state of emergency can be found. See idem., 452-469.

<sup>839</sup> For a good example of this contrasting description, see idem., 457.

<sup>840</sup> Mukhia, *The Mughals of India*, 152 f.

<sup>841</sup> Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries*, 72-76.

extensive report of Akbar's successful siege of Chittorgarh in 1586.<sup>842</sup> In our text, however, we see the opposite: Musta'idd Hān says nothing about the women's voluntary desire to take their own lives and those of their children. Rather, our author states that it was the men's decision. Furthermore, the author notes how the insurgents retreated to close quarters, which particularly underlines their cowardice. In this way, they avoided confrontation in the open field against the heavily armed Mughals, who had not been trained for urban guerrilla warfare.

Thus, Musta'idd Hān does not treat this ritual as an exotic and heroic practice; rather, he puts into a context of barbarism and cowardice. In contrast, the Mughal army appears as a moral force: they do not lay hands on the population and took prisoners properly. Musta'idd Hān aims to underscore this with the subsequent indirect relativisation.

#### THE INDIRECT RELATIVISATION OF THE REBELLION OF THE PEASANTS AND THE BURNING WIVES OF THE DEFEATED

In the sentence that immediately follows the crushing of the uprising, Musta'idd Hān reports:

An order was issued that he (Shikan Hān) should appoint 200 horsemen from among his servants to guard the crops of the villages and to prevent the soldiers from oppressing any one or taking any child prisoner.<sup>843</sup>

This description thus underlines the contrast between both parties. This time Musta'idd Hān explicitly highlights what was previously implicit (the disciplined Mughal troops in contrast to the rebels' chaotic and aimless barbarity) by focusing on Aurangzīb's command that it was strictly forbidden to assault civilians. Here, it is explicitly Aurangzīb who sends Shikan Hān, one of his most senior generals, into the provinces to ensure that no one should lay hands on the harvest. Finally, in order to finish the direct and indirect relativisations of the violent crackdown, Musta'idd Hān applied his most effective strategy: the annual promotion of loyal Hindu generals. Our author reports:

On Wednesday (...) a letter accompanied by 1,000 mohars was received from Prince Muḥammad Mu'azzam giving news of the birth of a son to the daughter of Rup Singh Rathor. The child was named Daulatafza; a letter and jewels worth 100,000 rupees were sent to the child and its parents.<sup>844</sup>

<sup>842</sup> Beveridge, *The Akbarnama of Abū Fazl*, vol. 2, 331.

<sup>843</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*, 92; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āṣirī Ālamgiri*, 57.

<sup>844</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*, 93; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āṣirī Ālamgiri*, 58.

What makes so interesting is the fact that Aurangzīb is rewarding the descendants of one of his most dangerous rivals, and even seeks information on the offspring. It was Rup Singh Rathor who, in 1658 at the Battle of Samurgah, had the fate of the entire Mughal Empire in his hands. Ḥaf ī Ḥān tells us in his *Muntaḥab al-lubāb* about their clash on the battlefield. When the battle was at its peak, Rup Singh Rathor wrestled his way forward to Aurangzīb's war elephants and severed the latter's saddle with his legendary double-edged long sword. Aurangzīb escaped only by a whisker when his guard finally killed Rathor, even though Aurangzīb had commanded that this brave warrior should be kept alive.<sup>845</sup>

Although the birth of a grandson of such a high Hindu noble was undoubtedly important, our author does not mention the birth of each child of all the other well-respected Muslim noblemen. We thus see that Musta'idd Ḥān therefore pursued a much more profound strategy than it might initially appear: he wants to show that Aurangzīb did not harbour a hatred of Hinduism rooted in Islam.

Naturally, we also need to consider the fact that Rup Singh Rathor's new grandson bore a Muslim name (Daulatafza): this is a clear component of power and a sign of triumph over Rathor's Hindu family. Likewise, the subsequent gifts should be interpreted in the context of diplomacy and Aurangzīb's *Realpolitik*. However, it is still the case that our author describes a forgiving ruler, whose respect for such a dangerous and courageous enemy continued beyond death. This is evident when we compare this detailed description to the accounts given to the births of noble Muslim children<sup>846</sup> and the much shorter reports about the births of male descendants within Aurangzīb's own family. Musta'idd Ḥān also pursues this particularly strategy in the next section, where Aurangzīb mercy towards Gokla Jat's descendants plays a crucial role.

## CONFLICT 5: GOKLA JAT'S BRUTAL EXECUTION THE DIRECT RELATIVISATION

In the next section, Gokla Jat's capture is reported. Since 1669, he had led peasant uprisings in today's Mathura district and caused considerable losses. 1670 had just started and only three pages remain of the twelfth chapter when Musta'idd Ḥān writes:

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<sup>845</sup> Anees Syed, *Aurangzeb in Muntakhab al-Lubab*, Bombay, 1977, 96.

<sup>846</sup> Much shorter examples can be found in Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 48, 77, 181, 387, 404, 406, 482.

Gokla Jat, the accursed rebel and the ring-leader of the disturbance in the country of Tilpat, who was the cause of the killing of 'Abdun Nabi Ḥān and had plundered the pargana of S'adabad, was captured through the valour and efforts of Hasan 'Ali Ḥān and his peshkar Shaikh Raziuddin. The Ḥān sent him and his comrade Sonki to the Emperor in charge of Shaikh Qawm. By imperial order, his limbs were hacked off one after another in the rhabutra of the kotwdli. His son and daughter were made over to Jawahir Ḥān, ndzir, for being brought up (as Muslims). The daughter was married to Shah Quli Chelah (slave), an intimate servant of high rank. The son became a memoriser of the Quran with the name of Fazil, and in the opinion of the Emperor surpassed in correctness all other memorisers, and he had the happiness of hearing His Majesty's chanting of the Quran.<sup>847</sup>

Let us start with the direct relativisation. Our author starts this narration with a typical beginning, where he attributes all of the blame for the conflict to the rebels, thus describing the latter as the real aggressors. In this context, it is interesting to see that the author again emphasises the importance of discipline in capturing the rebels. This is followed by one of the most dramatic descriptions of an execution within the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* ('his limbs were hacked off one after another'). Here, however, we must remember that Musta'idd Ḥān does not intend to relativise the execution itself: this specific form of public execution, namely chopping off the limbs and subsequently mounting them at the city's four main gates, was a common form of criminal justice worldwide. In his important study, Richard von Dülmen summed up the court and penal rituals of pre-modern Europe with the term 'theatre of horror' (*Theater des Schreckens*).<sup>848</sup> The main aim of this theatre was to restore the victims' righteousness through the agonising torture of the condemned in public. A mild course of action towards Gokla Jat, whose uprising cost nearly 1,000 Mughal soldiers their lives, would surely have been interpreted as a sign of weakness. The pragmatic tone that pervades the entire *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* is especially evident in the fact that the author avoids the use of any vocabulary hostile to religion. Indeed, it is interesting to note how our author used this section to focus on Aurangzīb's clemency towards the rebel's descendant by explicitly emphasising that he married the latter's daughter to an intimate servant of high rank.

<sup>847</sup> Idem, 93-94; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*, 58.

<sup>848</sup> Richard Dülmen, *Theater des Schreckens. Gerichtspraxis und Strafrituale in der Frühen Neuzeit*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Munich, 1995.

The bracketed expressions '(slave/as Muslims)' do not correspond to the author's intention: they were inserted by Sarkar into his translation. By inserting 'slaves', Sarkar sought to underline the embarrassment of a royal Hindu daughter being married to a Muslim slave (who, in fact, was the emperor's intimate servant). Sarkar does the same when he highlights the fact that these children were brought up 'as Muslims'. Certainly, this education included the raising of the children as Muslims; however, it is striking that Musta'idd Hān again avoids mentioning the factor of religion. This act was generally considered to be a kindness rather than a punishment. It was also a common practice for prisoners to be educated at the Mughal court after their relatives had been killed.

Our author also stresses Aurangzīb's almost paternal feelings for Gokla Jat's son. This is particularly important, since, as we noted earlier, it is very rare for the reader to receive any direct information about the protagonist's feelings. That Musta'idd Hān ends a story about this most drastic form of execution by representing Aurangzīb in terms of paternal affection shows how much he endeavoured to put this scene into the correct perspective, even though it was completely legitimate from the empire's point of view. This kind of closure suggests that Musta'idd Hān clearly wanted to show to his recipient and the aristocratic Mughal court, which at this time contained more Hindu nobles than ever before ('the percentage of Hindus in the Mughal nobility increased from 22.3 per cent to 33.1 per cent'),<sup>849</sup> that his protagonist embodied the ideal Muslim ruler and did not rule his empire as a fundamentalist persecutor of Hindus. Although he responded with severity to violent riots that threatened the peace of his kingdom, he showed leniency once peace returned and was the father of all his subordinates.

#### THE INDIRECT RELATIVISATION

The conflict-ridden twelfth chapter ends as follows:

Shaikh Raziuddin, a very learned and highborn man of Bhagalpur in Bihar, was among the scholars engaged in compiling the Fatwa-i- Alamgiri and got a daily stipend of three rupees. He had many other accomplishments such as military skill, administrative capacity, pleasantness of speech, and knowledge about most places. His merits were reported to the Emperor by Qazi Muḥammad Husain Jaunpuri, Censor of the Court, and Bakhtawar Hān a personal attendant. He was given the rank of a *sadi* and gradually through the help of Hasan 'AH Hān, rose to be an

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<sup>849</sup>Husain, *Structure of Politics under Aurangzeb*, 86, who refers to Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzīb*.



Amir and, then a Hān and did splendid services. At last he sank into sleep in the cradle of death.<sup>850</sup>

What appears to be a rather unimportant anecdote is vital for our author's narrative strategy. Here, he cleverly contrasts the cultivated Mughal nobleman with the faceless savagery of the barbarian Gokla Jat and his followers, who cravenly withdrew from the open struggle and left them defenceless to burn in the fire. In this context, the features being praised are striking. Although his martial skills are highlighted, Musta'idd Hān obviously places more value on the non-military qualities of the outstanding Raziuddin ('administrative capacity, pleasantness of speech, and knowledge about most places'). In this way, Musta'idd Hān presents the prototype Mughal nobleman as an intellectual enthusiast whose qualities were so impressive that they were directly 'reported to the Emperor'. With these last sentences of the twelfth chapter, our author returns to one of his core messages; namely, that the protagonist was not interested in an entourage of obsequious nobles, but rather in efficient officials and inquisitive noblemen who enriched the management and culture of his court. Furthermore, closing the chapter with the noun 'death' (*marg*) increases the compassion of the recipient towards these meritorious nobles and helps him forget previous conflicts.

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<sup>850</sup> Musta'idd Hān, *Ma'āzīr-i Ālamgīrī*, 94; I took this translation from Sarkar, *Ma'āzīrī Ālamgīrī*, 59.

## CONCLUSION

The *Ma'āşir-i 'Ālamgīrī* is full of passages which seem at first glance to provide plenty of material for a traditional interpretation of the source. In the present chapter in particular, I focused on demonstrating how our author dealt with the many conflicts with which the empire was afflicted. It was shown that Musta'idd Hān's narrative strategy focused primarily on posing alternatives and to revise controversial events whenever possible.

On the basis of six conflicts, which at first glance do not provide any room for alternative readings, chapter four presented Musta'idd Hān's reinterpretation of these events, all of which contributed to the rebellions after Aurangzīb's death. As a chronicler of Aurangzīb's reign, Musta'idd Hān had to face these conflicts: he could not completely ignore them in order to invent a paradisiacal past. The key to my argument is that Musta'idd Hān did not simply accept these conflicts as given and then simply skiped to the next chapter. Rather, the author consistently tried to relativise these multifaceted conflicts (for example, the closure of non-Muslim institutions, the destruction of temples, or the execution of Hindus and non-believers) through two narrative techniques. It was shown that our author approached the diversive crackdowns against the non-Muslim institutions with the utmost caution and deliberation. I have dubbed these two techniques as the author's direct and indirect relativisations.

Musta'idd Hān often tried to incorporate a *direct relativisation* into any given conflict. We saw such a direct relativisation when the author tried to depict the destruction of stone elephants in as unspectacular a way as possible: he expressly indicated that this decision corresponded entirely with the general Islamic understanding of art. Musta'idd Hān thus avoided having to cheer for Aurangzīb's fanatical decision; rather, he tried to legitimise it rationally, based on a general understanding of traditional law. Furthermore, in this section, the role of the text as a mirror for the new ruler becomes visible: the new ruler was evidently expected to behave rationally in such decisions in the future. Finally, Musta'idd Hān also managed to leave his personal opinion in the text by describing the artwork as beautiful.

Just as important were the author's *indirect relativisations*. If Musta'idd Hān did not directly relativise a dramatic event, he still did so in an indirect way by grouping several relativising anecdotes around the event in question. As insignificant as these sections may appear on at first glance, the author uses it to express a specific form of criticism of his protagonist's decision and the text's second layer plus the author's actual intention becomes visible. Furthermore, his multifarious anecdotes successfully distracted the reader from contingent

events such as temple destruction and the execution of insurgents and Hindus by, for example, emotionally humanising the protagonist. By anthropomorphising Aurangzīb, he appears as one character among many. Here, Musta‘idd Ḥān emphasises his frailty and loneliness, which in turn increase compassion for Aurangzīb, even though he was often actually responsible for the conflict. Additionally, the permanent state of emergency, the representation of Aurangzīb as a caring father who took care of all his subordinates, and the portrayal of his discipline and austere lifestyle all contributed to helping the reader completely forget the actual conflicts.

Furthermore, Musta‘idd Ḥān constantly inserts the successful collaboration between the highest Muslim officials and Hindu noblemen around the several irritating events. Again, we must remember that he could have omitted this emphasis if he had not considered it important enough at this critical juncture in the text. With sections like these, Musta‘idd Ḥān wants to show that it was possible for Hindu nobles to collaborate at the highest level with Muslim nobles and to pursue their careers at the Mughal court so long as they subordinated themselves to the Mughal concept of empire without rebelling against the imperial centre. With this cleverly placed emphasis, the author manages to deemphasise the religious component of the temple destruction. This technique of regularly highlighting successful cooperation and solidarity between Hindus and Muslims became a crucial part of our author’s narrative strategy, one which we will discuss in more detail at the end of the third section.

Finally, the present has shown that Musta‘idd Ḥān did not consider the temple demolitions as praise worthy or important enough to justify lengthy and detailed descriptions. Nor did he, with one exception, root such events in Islam. Rather, the author tried to embed ten of the eleven temple destructions amidst fightings and riots, thereby showing that they needed to be understood within a context of widespread violence. He did so by either describing the temple guards as drugged monsters bereft of humanity or, as we will shortly show, by portraying Aurangzīb as the avenger of Abū l-Faḏl, a life-long fighter for Hindu-Muslim dialogue and collaboration.

If we once again recall the fact that the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* has been mainly used to prove Aurangzīb’s alleged hatred of Hindus, his religious fanaticism, and his will to destroy all of the temples in the kingdom, it becomes obvious why we must understand Musta‘idd Ḥān’s actual intention and narrative strategy as a Muslim intellectual in early eighteenth-century Mughal India. Our author did not celebrate these seemingly frightening deeds as the heroic actions of a just Muslim ruler. Rather, he sought to explain them meaningfully and separated

them from religious dimensions; in doing so, he relativised them. This must have been extremely difficult for the official chronicler of such a controversial ruler.



## CHAPTER 5: SOME REFLECTIONS ON MUSTĀ‘IDD ḤĀN’S TECHNIQUES OF COMPILATION

### PRELUDE

As we have already seen, the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* possesses a very bad reputation in comparison to other Mughal chronicles, mainly because the text relates at length the crisis of the Mughal Empire and also because the text’s protagonist is the Mughal ‘bad guy’, Aurangzīb ‘Ālamgīr. The crisis described in the narrative and the bad reputation of the protagonist were transferred to our author and his chronicle. No less than this, Sir Jadunath Sarkar presented in his translation the image of an ultra-prthodox Aurangzīb. The effect is that the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* is repeatedly brought up in current political debates when it comes to proving the fundamental evil of Aurangzīb’s government and the Muslim presence in India. Additionally, Sajida Alvi, in her much-cited article on the three main chronicles reporting on Aurangzīb’s reign, confronts Musta‘idd Ḥān with accusations which have long been thrown at pre-modern Muslim chroniclers in general. As Stephan Conermann argues:

Long before the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Muslim chronicles served (Islamic) scholars primarily to reconstruct a naked skeleton of historical events and political facts, trying to narrate the past how it really has been. And, by doing so, modern historians ranted frequently and extensively against the, in their opinion, sloppy work of their pre-modern Muslim predecessors, who, so the accusation goes, simply copied from the works of older historians or were just compiling already known material in a new order, apparently because of a lack of talent or out of insufficient scientific awareness. Pre-modern Muslim chronicles were therefore only assessed whether they mentioned new, hitherto unknown events or whether their report covered with the text previously classified as the reliable one.<sup>851</sup>

Sajida Alvi’s conclusion about the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* and its author corresponds exactly with Conermann’s argument, as she ultimately accuses our author of sloppy historical work and withholding his sources.<sup>852</sup> Although she grants him a certain degree of accuracy, she nevertheless concludes at the end of her essay that our author simply overlooked too many historical events, although they find a prominent place in the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma* and *Mir’āt al-‘ālam*: this is an argument which primarily relies on the problematic works of Sarkar and

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<sup>851</sup> See Conermann, review: Kurt Franz, *Kompilation in arabischen Chroniken*.

<sup>852</sup> Alvi, *The Historians of Aurangzeb*, 70.

Alvi. She believes that Musta‘idd Ḥān reports too often about events that are historically worthless and should not be in a historiographical text. And, finally, she also accuses Musta‘idd Ḥān of not mentioning when he referred to Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān’s *Mir’āt al-‘ālam* in the second half of the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*.<sup>853</sup> We have already discussed the fact that there was actually no need for this, as he rightfully perceived himself as part of the multiple authorship of this earlier text. And as he repeatedly names the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma* as one of his most important sources for the text’s first part, which shows that he had no problem of naming his sources in general, we should rather label his narrative strategy within the text’s second half with the term ‘compilation’.

Muslim historians often orientated themselves on the basis of their predecessors, redesigning and modifying extant texts. This process of compilation was performed by the interaction of different techniques such as paraphrasing passages, adjustments, reduction, the addition of new material, and stylistic modifications to the emerging text. The author neither explicitly nor implicitly had to name its template in his text. Although compilation is one of the outstanding characteristics of medieval Arabic historiography, it still has a bad reputation as plagiarism. But is compiling truly equal to copying and is Alvi’s accusation justified? Or is it the case that Musta‘idd Ḥān’s writing process should be regarded as an act of individual literary creativity? These are the questions, among others, which I seek to answer in the following chapter on the basis of two templates from the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*.<sup>854</sup>

Within the coming analysis of the compilation process, I seek to show that Musta‘idd Ḥān, from 1707 onwards, produced the image of a righteous king whose legitimacy is explicitly not backward-looking, since the author deliberately turned away from the prominent templates of the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma* and *Mir’āt al-‘ālam*: we therefore clearly encounter a critical individual working behind the text. As will be shown, Musta‘idd Ḥān characterises the ideal ruler in a way which did not appeal solely either to the protection of the faith or to his noble origin as the main pillars of his legitimation of rule, but rather to his continuous work ethic, his discipline, and a spartan lifestyle. In this context, our author’s definition of the just ruler is diametrically opposed to the concept of the oriental despot.<sup>855</sup> Instead, he describes a forgiving

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<sup>853</sup> Ibid.

<sup>854</sup> I am very thankful to join Stephan Conermann’s working group, which focused on this precise topic. For a detailed discussion, see Stephan Conermann’s brand-new study, *Innovation oder Plagiat? Kompilationstechniken in der Vormoderne*, Berlin, 2015.

<sup>855</sup> On this concept, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ‘Frank Submissions. The Company and the Mughals between Sir Thomas Roe and Sir William Norris’ in Huw Bowen, Margarette Lincoln, and Nigel Rigby (eds.), *The Worlds of the East India Company*, Rochester, NY, 2002, 69-97.

and powerful ruler who let all his nobles participate in the expansion and building of the empire so long as they subordinated themselves to the ‘notion of empire’.<sup>856</sup> The present chapter will hence show how Musta‘idd Ḥān, under the complex circumstances of his time and environment (crisis on the one hand and the collective self-confidence of the *munšīs* on the other), designed his very own version depiction of Aurangzīb’s rule and left a distinctly individual stamp on the *Ma’āšir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*.

Here, we will analyse two main cases, both of which find a prominent place in the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*, the *Mir‘āt al-‘ālam*, and the *Ma’āšir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. Firstly, the focus lies on Musta‘idd Ḥān’s compilation techniques, whereby he placed sections from the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma* into his own text in regard to the description of the two rival brothers, Aurangzīb and his elder brother Dārā Šikūh (1).<sup>857</sup> The *Mir‘āt al-‘ālam* serves as a second example of a template to show how precisely our author knits together the ‘narrative’s breaks’<sup>858</sup> (namely Aurangzīb’s famous ban of music) and how he incorporates them meaningful in his own text. We will see from these two examples that Musta‘idd Ḥān had a clear agenda for writing his text, as he ultimately created a new ruler whose essential legitimacy was never based solely on religion, let alone violence against non-Muslims; rather, this ruler had a pragmatic *Realpolitik*, which included the protection of all his subordinates and offering everyone a career at the court so as long as they performed their duties professionally and were subordinated to his notion of empire.

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<sup>856</sup> For a linguistic survey and a detailed analysis of the uses of the ‘*notion of empire*’ in the current political science literature and in Western international studies, see Danilo Zolo, ‘Contemporary Uses of the Notion of ‘Empire’’ in *The Monist*, vol. 90, no. 1, 2007, 48-64.

<sup>857</sup> I will focus on the first 15 years, which make up the first 15 chapters of the *Ma’āšir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, mainly to remain close to the first ten years reported in the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*.

<sup>858</sup> Regarding *narrative breaks*, see Nicolas Lowe, *The Classical Plot and the Invention of Western Narrative*, Cambridge, 2000, 72 f; Gerhard Frank, *Erlebniswissenschaft. Über die Kunst den Menschen zu begeistern*, Münster 2011, 197 f; also Ann Spangenberg’s chapter on ‘the use of the discursive and narrative breaks through the protagonists’ (=Nutzung diskursiver und narrativer Brüche durch die Protagonisten), in idem, *Kommunikative Identität im Roman der angelsächsischen Postmoderne: John Fowles, Peter Ackroyd, A. S. Byatt*, Würzburg, 2009, 123 f; also Michael Neecke on medieval German chronicles, see idem, *Literarische Strategien narrativer Identitätsbildung. Eine Untersuchung der frühen Chroniken des Deutschen Ordens*, Frankfurt/Main, 2008, e.g. 76.



## SECTION 1: MUSTA‘IDD ḤĀN’S TECHNIQUES OF COMPILATION AND THE TWO RIVAL BROTHERS. DĀRĀ ŠIKŪH VS. AURANGZĪB ‘ĀLAMGĪR

It is only recently that research on early modern India has largely reached agreement when it comes to the assessment of Aurangzīb’s elder brother Dārā Šikūh (died 1659). As the eldest son of Šāh Ġāhān and a free spirit among the princes, the classic narrative argues that he would have achieved the political and cultural synthesis that had begun under Akbar, leading the Mughal Empire to its peak and towards a ‘modern’ and enlightened society in the eighteenth century.<sup>859</sup> Since his early youth, Dārā had been interested in the spiritual dimensions of Islām and Hinduism. Supported by numerous significant Muslim and Hindu intellectuals, he patronised outstanding works that testify the cosmopolitan spirit of this age and culture, among them especially the *Mağma’ al-Baḥrayn*,<sup>860</sup> in which Dārā aimed to unite Šūfī and Vedantic teachings. At the end of his reign, Šāh Ġāhān put all his hope in Dārā, who he clearly wanted to succeed him.<sup>861</sup> On the other hand, his younger brother Aurangzīb aimed to spread of Islam throughout India and lead his empire not forward but back into the darkness of the Middle Ages:

Dārā was the most cultured of the sons of Shah Jahan; he was in fact the finest scholar the Mughal dynasty had ever produced (...) We do not know what dreams Dārā had for his empire, but they certainly would not have been the same as the dreams of Aurangzīb. India was at a crossroads in the mid-seventeenth century; it had potential of moving forward with Dara, or of turning back to medievalism with Aurangzīb. But India’s destiny was with Aurangzīb.<sup>862</sup>

Rajeev Kinra has summarised the consequences of this simplified explanation of the highly complex social situation in Mughal India in the mid-seventeenth century, which continually refers to Akbar and *Dārā* as the only tolerant exceptions to a generally strict Sunni system of rule:

Even when it is done by well-meaning scholars out to praise them, this routine juxtaposition of Dārā with Akbar as beacons of liberal tolerance, to the near total exclusion of all other Indo-Muslim monarchs, nobles, and intellectuals who might have engaged with, patronized, shown tolerance toward, or otherwise shared a similar ‘admiration for Hindu culture’, creates an effect

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<sup>859</sup> It was not until the important studies of Rajeev Kinra and Munis D. Faruqui that the classical evaluation of Dārā was challenged. Faruqui, *Princes of the Mughal Empire* and Kinra, *Infantilizing Bābā Dārā*. The classic argumentation can be found in Annemarie Schimmel and Stuart Welch (eds.), *Anvari’s Divan. A Pocket Book for Akbar*, New York, 1983, 9; Michael Fisher (ed.), *Visions of Mughal India. An Anthology of European Travel Writing*, London, 2007, just to name a few: more examples can be found in Kinra, *Infantilizing Bābā Dārā*, 166.

<sup>860</sup> Shayegan, *Hindouisme et Soufisme*.

<sup>861</sup> See Faruqui, *Princes of the Mughal Empire*, 235 f.

<sup>862</sup> Eraly, *Emperors of the Peacock Throne*, 336.

in South Asian historiography whereby the two are treated not only as exceptional individuals, but in fact as exceptions to an implied default position of Islamic orthodoxy - an orthodox stance to which Awrangzib is often very simplistically viewed as some sort of logical 'return'. In turn, such 'implacable orthodoxy' on Awrangzib's part is adduced almost axiomatically, framing what was actually a somewhat predictable continuation of Mughal expansionist policies rather as a fundamentalist fool's errand of 'extending Islamic dominion'.<sup>863</sup>

That Aurangzib's main opponents in the Deccan were his own co-religionists does not matter in this classical reasoning, and neither does the argument that it might ultimately have been Aurangzib's *individual* decision to dispense with music only at the heart of his court because it did not fit with his own views on what it was to be a devout Muslim. Historians have generally concluded that this famous ban of music must have been, *tout court*, implemented in the entirety of India.<sup>864</sup>

In the following section, we will focus on the character representations of these two competitors in the *'Ālamgīr-nāma* and the *Ma'āẓir-i 'Ālamgīrī*. In the *'Ālamgīr-nāma*, which was written in Aurangzib's lifetime and was eventually banned, there are plenty of detailed descriptions of the protagonist in which he appears as the narrative's flawless hero who is not subject to any criticism: these are mixed with smaller descriptions that repeatedly remind the recipient of Aurangzib's excellent qualities.

The same scheme (detailed block descriptions and shorter textual representations of the protagonist) can be found in the *Ma'āẓir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, but on a much smaller scale. For understanding the seemingly contradictory character descriptions of Aurangzib and Dārā in the *Ma'āẓir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, let us remember that Aurangzib could no longer threaten Mustā'idd Ḥān with censorship and that the author had a new recipient from 1707 onwards: thus he was able to design a much more complex picture of the two brothers. To analyse the compilation techniques at work in the description of the characters, we will focus mainly on the briefer depictions and the contrast between these specific modes of representation.

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<sup>863</sup> Kinra, *Infantilizing Bābā Dārā*, 167.

<sup>864</sup> *Ibid.*

### 1.1 Dārā in the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*

(1.1.1) Most recently, Dārā Šikūh not only limited himself to the free-thinking and heretical tendencies of *taṣawwuf*, but (even) showed a preference for the religion and institutions of the Hindus. He was constantly in the company of Brahmans, Yogis, and Sannyasis and he praised these unworthy teachers of heresy as learned men and as true masters of scholarship. He looked at their books, which they call *bīd*, the word of God, which was sent from heaven and called them classic and impressive. He was so seduced by this *bīd*, that he gathered together from all parts of the empire Brahmans and Sannyasis and paid them great respect and attention and let them work on the translation of this *bīd*. All of his time he spent with this vicious work and devoted all his attention to the content of these wretched books. (...) Through these distorted views, he gave up praying, fasting, and other obligations that were command by law. It was obvious that if Dārā Šikūh should gain the throne and consolidate his power, the fundamentals of the faith would have been in danger (...) <sup>865</sup>

### 1.2 Dārā in the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*

(1.2.1) In addition to Dārā Šikūh’s vile manner, the main reason of Aurangzīb’s wrath was his (Dārā) liability to the teachings of the Hindus and the constant disregard of Islamic religious rules. <sup>866</sup>

(1.2.2) Sitting on horse, Dārā went just behind his camp, but did not dare to step a bit further in fear of Aurangzīb. He tortured his soldiers by letting them all day in full armour in the burning sun. A large number of them died of hunger and thirst. At the end of the day he withdraws. <sup>867</sup>

(1.2.3) As Dārā enjoyed a comfortable break, his army (Aurangzīb’s) returned, whereupon Dārā went into the wilderness. <sup>868</sup>

<sup>865</sup> Elliot, *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, vol. 7, 178; This is one of the most detailed descriptions of Dārā in the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*. Further characterisations of Dārā within the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma* can be found in Kāzīm, *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*, 36 und 40.

<sup>866</sup> Mustai’dd Ḥān, *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, 4.

<sup>867</sup> Idem, 6.

<sup>868</sup> Idem, 18.

(1.2.4) At about this time Bahādur Han brought Dārā Šikūh to the enthusiastic court. He was held in Ĥizirābād Palace. There were many reasons that the dust of his life had to be removed from the surface of the earth. The light of his life was extinguished on the night of 21 *Dū l-ḥiġġa*.<sup>869</sup>

### 1.3 Aurangzīb in the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*

(1.3.1) The protection of the true faith and the observance of the divine law, handed down through the top of all the prophets (...), has always been the focus of this enlightened consciousness. He believed that the purpose of his rule (exactly) consists in this divine law and that the spread of it was the aim of his king- and leadership, (...) and to protect the faith even more intensively. As this *Ḥidīw*, the propagator of religion and with pure faith, heard about the sinful beliefs and misdeeds of this deplorable and unfortunate (=Dārā) it evoked, as a conscientious Muslim, his displeasure.<sup>870</sup>

(1.3.2) And so, in a consistent way, the world-adorning prudence (=Aurangzīb), a revelation of the heavenly mystery and the beginning of divine splendours and inspiration, regarded it advisable to not longer accept the contemptible scandals, habits, and immoral characteristics and deeds of this foolish ignoramus (=Dārā).<sup>871</sup>

### 1.4 Aurangzīb in the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*

(1.4.1) He always paid homage to and thanked the Creator for this important and great fate by worshiping God, implemented the sacred law of the Prophet, and wiped out all traces of the illegal and prohibited practices. In spite of his glory and power, not a single second he begrudged his body to rest or slackness. Instead, he increased the splendour of the court by his constant vigilance of his devotion to God, the spread of justice, increased the general happiness and attention regarding the status of peasants

<sup>869</sup> Idem, 27.

<sup>870</sup> Muḥammad Kāẓīm, *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*, 35-36; see also Alvi, *The Historians of Awrangzeb*, 62.

<sup>871</sup> Muḥammad Kāẓīm, *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*, 40; Alvi, *The Historians of Awrangzeb*, 61.

and soldiers, as well as the rules of justice and equality. I hope that the spiritual and material worlds may be illuminated by the rule of this religious emperor forever. <sup>872</sup>
(1.4.2) It was ordered that edicts should proclaim the accession of the throne and the happy news of the protection and enjoyment of the whole kingdom. <sup>873</sup>
(1.4.3) As it did not situate to the people because of fasting, the continuation of these celebrations has been postponed. <sup>874</sup>
(1.4.4) Of Aurangzīb's decision to remove toll fees in the empire '(...) and you can not imagine what was thus given up of the kingdom's income.' <sup>875</sup>
(1.4.5) It is well known that few kings fight so many battles throughout their reigns than this one (Aurangzīb) in just a single year. <sup>876</sup>
(1.4.6) The heart of the ruler was deeply saddened. <sup>877</sup>
(1.4.7) Immediately after the death of his father Šāh Ġāhān there was only one reason for Aurangzīb to extended his stay in Agra a few days, because '(...) of very specific work, it was necessary for him to stay there.' <sup>878</sup>

### ANALYSIS 1: DĀRĀ IN THE 'ĀLAMĠĪR-NĀMĀ AND THE MA'ĀṢIR-I 'ĀLAMĠĪRĪ

In our first extract from the 'Ālamġīr-nāma (1.1.1), it soon becomes clear that the main complaint against Dārā is his sympathy for the Hindus and Sufis alike. He had studied the scholars of these other religions far too much and had given up the rules imposed by the true faith. If Dārā came to power, so Muḥammad Kāzīm says in the last sentence of the present excerpt, the fundamentals of the faith would be in danger. Thus, the author leaves no doubt that Dārā is the enemy of the empire.

<sup>872</sup> Mustai'dd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamġīrī*, 20-21, Sarkar, *Ma'āṣir-i- 'Ālamġīrī*, 11. The next statements of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamġīrī* accord with Sarkar's translations.

<sup>873</sup> *Idem*, 23-24.

<sup>874</sup> *Idem*, 35.

<sup>875</sup> *Idem*, 27.

<sup>876</sup> *Idem*, 20.

<sup>877</sup> *Idem*, 46.

<sup>878</sup> *Idem*, 54.

At first glance, there is no difference in the excerpts from the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* (1.2.1-1.2.4). However, what strikes us here is that Musta'idd Ḥān sought to put forward more numerous and different allegations against Dārā. This is also done in the *'Ālamgīr-nāma*, where Dārā consistently acts as a negative contrast to the protagonist; however, the religiously motivated accusations clearly prevail here.<sup>879</sup>

It is true that the accusations against Dārā's religious vices in the quoted descriptions from the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* are significant as well (1.2.1), but it must be stressed that in the first two opening descriptions of Dārā in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* he is merely described as a timid troublemaker. Although he is accused of treason and cowardice, we read nothing of any crime against Islām.<sup>880</sup> We also recognise that Dārā is not blamed for dealing too much with the Sufis; with this in mind, it is interesting to note that within the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* we see that Aurangzīb himself often behaved in quite an unorthodox fashion by visiting the tombs of saints that had been *Ṣūfī* hubs.<sup>881</sup> It is also worth noting that Musta'idd Ḥān, within the first ten years of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, uses specifically Shiite symbols at decisive points in the narrative in order to address specifically potential Shiite recipients so that they could also identify themselves with his text.<sup>882</sup>

The reduction of religion's importance in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* is also clarified by 1.2.1, which follows Dārā's first description in the text. This quote is significant, as it is the first time Dārā's religious vices are brought against him; however, almost as importantly, his general 'vicious way' is mentioned *before* the actual religious sacrilege. This form of description, namely the mixed accusations, continues until Dārā's death and is particularly evident in the following quote. Here (1.2.2) Dārā is described as a decadent and heartless nobleman to whom the fate of common soldiers does not matter. The author places the protagonist in a sharp contrast to Dārā. As we have already seen in the description of the accident at the Pīr Panḡāl Pass, the former was deeply shocked by the suffering of his common soldiers, while Dārā is described as a coward, not daring to move towards the front:

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<sup>879</sup> See e.g. Muḥammad Kāzīm, *'Ālamgīr-nāma*, 36.

<sup>880</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 3.

<sup>881</sup> Idem, 90.

<sup>882</sup> Idem, 30, see in detail my discussion in chapter 2 on the twelve brave Mughal warriors and the moon symbol.

through this, the pathos of distance between Dārā and his followers is particularly emphasised.<sup>883</sup>

The accusation of decadence continues in the next example (1.2.3). As Dārā indulged in a leisurely break, his younger brother finally manages to catch him up, whereupon Dārā's only choice is to flee into the jungle. Here, Mustai'dd Ḥān skilfully links his characters to a specific setting which complements and reinforces the direct character description. Accordingly, Dārā withdraws into a setting that is consistently avoided by the protagonist throughout the narrative. The jungle also symbolises the unknown and the dark, a space ultimately unordered and undisciplined by men. The description of Dārā's chosen *chaotic setting* therefore matches the direct description of his *unstable character*, an important fact given that his opponent primarily accused him of rejecting the holy God-given order.

By assigning a specific setting to each of these two contrasting figures, our author underlines the dualism between decadence and disorder/chaos/lack of discipline on the part of Dārā and the discipline and reliability of Aurangzīb. Hence, the author expressly points out that Dārā stays either at his home<sup>884</sup> (= possession=decadence) or, more generally, in uncontrollable and generally repulsive settings, such as at the night,<sup>885</sup> the rivers,<sup>886</sup> the mountains,<sup>887</sup> the jungle,<sup>888</sup> and the wilderness<sup>889</sup> (= the unknown=chaos=indiscipline): these settings are never entered by Aurangzīb and his entourage during the first ten years of the *Ma'āşir-i 'Ālamgīrī*. Rather, Mustai'dd Ḥān states on several occasions that Aurangzīb's generals pursue Dārā in different ways. For example, as the latter continued his flight into the mountains, Aurangzīb called his troops back, thus preventing them from entering the geography preferred by the enemy.<sup>890</sup> Interestingly enough, the imperial troops suffer a setback exactly at the moment when one of their generals (Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ) ceases to obey Aurangzīb's order and led his troops into the night and the water, two of the dangerous environments.<sup>891</sup> On the contrary, our author portrays the marches and travels of his protagonist as occurring only during the day.<sup>892</sup> he

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<sup>883</sup> On Nietzsche's concept, see Volker Gerhardt, *Pathos und Distanz. Studien zur Philosophie Friedrich Nietzsches*, Stuttgart, 1988.

<sup>884</sup> Mustai'dd Ḥān, *Ma'āşir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 7.

<sup>885</sup> Idem, 45.

<sup>886</sup> Idem, 64.

<sup>887</sup> Idem, 19.

<sup>888</sup> Idem, 17.

<sup>889</sup> Ibid.

<sup>890</sup> Idem, 10-11.

<sup>891</sup> Idem, 18.

<sup>892</sup> Idem, 7.

consistently shuns the darkness and only enters human structures and subordinated spaces, such as the mosque,<sup>893</sup> gardens,<sup>894</sup> hunting houses,<sup>895</sup> or the houses of friendly nobles.<sup>896</sup>

At this point it is also important to note that, within the first ten years of the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, none of the protagonist's preferred settings are described as sumptuous. Nor do we receive any information at any point that Aurangzīb ever actually possessed a house, let alone a palace (in sharp contrast to Dārā's house); the only possessive pronouns which report Aurangzīb's ownership of a setting is *his own* tent where he preferred to sleep.<sup>897</sup> Through this emphasis, the protagonist's spartan character and his closeness to his soldiers is underlined rather than imperial possession. Thus the recipient encounters a ruler who consistently avoided pomp and rest; in sharp contrast to his brother, he was always on the move and never remained long in one place.

Let us now return to Dārā's characterisation in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*: here, it soon becomes clear that our author was keen to accuse Dārā of different fallings and crimes. No longer is Dārā only accused of the religious vices that were initially mentioned (1.2.1). Rather, he is described as being haphazard and undisciplined. Musta'idd Ḥān thus subscribes to the criticism that befell Dārā during his lifetime: such opponents reduced their religious allegations against Dārā whilst also accusing him of decadence, arrogance, extravagance, and a lack of leadership. This very diverse debate, often detached from religion, had already begun in the years which preceded the brothers' war, when it was still far from clear which of the two sons once would succeed Šāh Ġāhān. This demonstrates once more the broad and multifarious Mughal public sphere, the discourse of which cannot solely be reduced to religious matters: many European envoys also reported with the greatest interest about these very different assessments of the two rival brothers.<sup>898</sup>

With these varied negative descriptions of the nature of the protagonist's double, it is clear that Musta'idd Ḥān was not an isolated author who worked in a narrow-minded way on his chronicle. Through the upbringing of his former foster father Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān, several early promotions, and his later prominent rank, he had access to the highest intellectual circles and to the different areas of the diverse Mughal public sphere, in which the

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<sup>893</sup> Idem, e.g. 32.

<sup>894</sup> Idem, 10.

<sup>895</sup> Idem, 59.

<sup>896</sup> Idem, 51.

<sup>897</sup> Idem, 10.

<sup>898</sup> In detail Jorge Flores, 'I Will Do as My Father Did'. Regarding the expanding Mughal public sphere, see Kinra, *Infantilizing Bābā Dārā*.



different views and interpretations of common experiences were vividly discussed. He skilfully reflects these debates within his own text.

Let us now switch to Dārā's execution, his last detailed description in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* (1.2.4). This is significant, as the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* clearly sets itself apart from many other contemporary accounts. After the empire's leading jurists debated at length about Dārā's religious vices, his degrading procession in Delhi followed: this was held at the direct command of Aurangzīb and was supported by a cheering crowd that mocked and taunted the prisoner.<sup>899</sup> John Richards summarised this event thusly in a standard work that describes Aurangzīb as an ultra-orthodox ruler and Dārā as a tolerant victim:

When Dārā Shukuh arrived at Delhi as a prisoner, Aurangzib first had him paraded in public humiliation through the streets of the city. His appearance and his past generosity aroused much public sympathy.<sup>900</sup>

However, in his own text, Musta'idd Ḥān not only remains silent about the religious scholars supporting Aurangzīb's decision: his presentation also lacks any reports about a triumph or information about a humiliated prisoner, which other sources mention in detail. In our excerpt, it is rather surprising that Dārā is not held in a dungeon but in a palace. Although we read that the courtiers are enthusiastic that Bahādur Ḥān had finally caught Dārā, these are the only positive emotions in this event and are only briefly mentioned. Additionally, these positive emotions on the winner's side are only mentioned during Dārā's quick exhibition to the courtly audience, again lacking any form of either degradation or spitefulness. In this context, it is very conspicuous that after the actual execution there is nothing said about any positive emotions on Aurangzīb's side. It therefore seems very likely that Musta'idd Ḥān in 1707, almost 50 years after the execution took place, was very aware of the execution's unpopularity, since Dārā, despite being criticised for his lifestyle and character, still had a large following, not least among the Hindus.

So here we see a key reason why our author did not use this scene to represent the protagonist celebrating at the centre of attention and did not describe him as the chosen winner who now

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<sup>899</sup> For an introduction to this topic, see Munis Faruqui's lecture at the Habib University, s. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7MreWrLgKG8>, last accessed 15/1/2013; Faruqui quotes Dārā's execution from the *'Ālamgīr-nāma*, which gives three full pages to the execution: see Muḥammad Kāzīm, *'Ālamgīr-nāma*, 431- end of 433. The most detailed narratives on the execution can be found in '(...) non-official histories and the accounts of European travellers, such as Ishwar Das Nagar, Khafī Ḥān, Bernier and others', see Husain, *Aurangzeb and the Court Historian*, 12.

<sup>900</sup> Unfortunately, Richards does not name his sources regarding this quotation, see idem, *The Mughal Empire*, 161. However, it seems that he refers to Ḥafī Ḥān's detailed description, which is quoted here on p. 42, see idem, *Muntaḥab al-lubāb*, vol. 2, ed. Kabīr ad-Dīn Aḥmad 'Alī, Calcutta, 1869-1874, 80-87.

savours his triumph; rather, Musta‘idd Ḥān decided to keep Aurangzīb totally out of the scene. In terms of the narrative’s structure, the reason for this is because the execution occurs at night (‘on the night of 21 Dū l-ḥiġġa’); thus, it happened in a setting that the protagonist consciously avoided. However, the protagonist’s absence becomes even more surprising, since Dārā’s execution would have been *the* perfect moment to charge him with all of his religious transgressions as the main reason for his execution. However, even here the author remains silent and merely puts ‘*numerous reasons*’ forward as those which eventually led to his death. Our author is referring to the tradition that, once the traditional wars of succession between brothers came to an end, vanquished princes were generally executed; in the light of this tradition, Dārā’s execution appears much less dramatic.<sup>901</sup> Furthermore, the unusually melancholic tone and the high lyricism that mark Dārā’s end also astonishes: ‘(...) his life had to be removed from the surface of the earth (and) the light of his life was extinguished.’

If we consider all of this, it would seem that Musta‘idd Ḥān decided to keep his protagonist completely away from this crucial event. In his decision to represent Dārā’s execution in this specific and remarkably concise way, we should also recognise a form of critique against his former ruler. Given that his main recipient Šāh ‘Alam Bahādur had a rather Hindu-friendly position at the beginning of his reign, it was certainly not in the interest of the author to unsettle the new ruler with a vengeful execution of Dārā, with whom the new ruler might even have identified, and to destroy his sympathy towards Aurangzīb completely. In this report, which so clearly differs from the prominent templates with which Musta‘idd Ḥān was working, we can also see the increased confidence of our author, who obviously had no problem breaking with the historical and intellectual authorities of Aurangzīb’s times. It was generally known among scholars that Muḥammad Kāzīm was appointed by Aurangzīb at the beginning of his reign as his new chronicler because of his literary skills.<sup>902</sup> Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān also praises Kāzīm in his *Mir‘āt al-‘ālam* as an intellectual of great erudition, together with the scholar Muḥammad Hāšim Ḥāfī Ḥān (died around 1731), a member of a well-respected family and author of the *Mutaḥab al-lubāb*, who refers to Kāzīm as his absolute reference.<sup>903</sup> Our author does so as well, since he expressly refers to the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma* and recommends it to his reader for further information.<sup>904</sup>

<sup>901</sup> See in detail Faruqi, *Princes of the Mughal Empire*, Introduction.

<sup>902</sup> Elliot, *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians*, vol. 7, 177.

<sup>903</sup> Ibid.

<sup>904</sup> Mustai‘dd Ḥān, *Ma‘āzīr-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, e.g. 40, 67.

However, despite all of this, he clearly distances himself at key points, such as the execution of Dārā, and presents his individual view and interpretation.

Continuing in this vein, Dārā's execution appears in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* as a necessity, which, ultimately, had nothing to do with religious affairs anymore and which Aurangzīb only watched from a distance. He, in Mustai'dd Ḥān's depiction, did not identify himself with the execution, nor was he seeking adoration from his subjects. There is decidedly nothing about vengeance and violence against a 'Hindu friend': rather, it is precisely the emphasis on the 'many reasons' which made the execution indispensable. No less than this, the subsequent poetical description of the execution generates sympathy and compassion, even if only for a short time, in the recipient for Dārā's fate, since he appears to be a victim driven by circumstances into the position of the humiliated enemy of Aurangzīb.

The author's specific intentions (to reduce the importance of the execution and the religious factor as much as possible, to keep the protagonist completely away from the execution, and to avoid even the slightest negative characterisations of Dārā) become especially clear in the descriptions which were immediately adjoined to Dārā's death. Only a sentence later, our author reports that the rulers rewarded the Hindu noble Raja Jai Singh. This is, at first sight, nothing special: the public promotion of loyal and brave Hindu generals functioned as an integral part of each year's events in the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*. At this point, however, it is explicitly stated that the Hindu general received twice as many of the finest horses as a reward as the Muslim noble Bahādur Ḥān, the hero who captured Dārā for his ruler.<sup>905</sup> In terms of the highly cultivated etiquette of the Mughal court,<sup>906</sup> the necessity of and compliance to Mustai'dd Ḥān expressly insists upon in several places,<sup>907</sup> this is a very significant matter.

However, it is not only this preference for a Hindu nobleman against an exceptionally valuable Muslim noble that is remarkable. The routine annual description of rewarded Hindu nobles also clearly demarcates the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* and its author from the *'Ālamgīr-nāma*, since the latter often remains silent on Hindu promotions.<sup>908</sup> In the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*,

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<sup>905</sup> Idem, 27.

<sup>906</sup> On the importance of etiquette in the pre-modern Muslim courts of India and the consequences that might arise from violating it, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters. Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia*, Cambridge, Mass., 2012, 79 f. Also, in regards to the small field of studies on etiquette and comportment among elite societies in pre-colonial India, see Daud Ali, 'Aristocratic Body Techniques in Early Medieval India' in Rajat Datta (ed.), *Rethinking a Millennium. Perspectives on Indian History from the Eighth to the Eighteenth Century. Essays for Harbans Mukhia*, New Delhi, 2008, 25-56; also Harbans Mukhia's second chapter on 'Etiquette and Empire' in *The Mughals in India*; also Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World*, 92-99, 138-139.

<sup>907</sup> Mustai'dd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 55.

<sup>908</sup> See for example Muḥammad Kāẓim, *'Ālamgīr-nāma*, 139.

the Hindu promotions held a fixed place in the annual descriptions, although only a maximum of ten pages per year were available to Musta'idd Ḥān in comparison to the almost 100 pages available to Muḥammad Kāzīm. The author himself stresses the dilemma that he could only briefly report on important events because there was not enough space available.<sup>909</sup> In Musta'idd Ḥān's decision to incorporate the annual promotion of proven Hindu nobles who identified themselves with the empire, the specific and individual intention of the author is once again clear: he *does not* seek to describe the ideal ruler as an ultra-orthodox Muslim.

Therefore, the message to the new ruler Šāh 'Alam Bahādur could not be clearer. The execution, as Musta'idd Ḥān depicts it, had little to do with Dārā's friendliness towards the Hindus or with Aurangzīb's hostility to them. Rather, the ruler rewarded everyone who stood up for the empire's welfare, even going so far as to put Hindus in front of the most respected Muslim nobles. Additionally, the execution serves to portray Aurangzīb, despite Dārā's final death, as a righteous and forgiving ruler, as he later orders that Dārā be buried in Humāyūn's tomb. This was a highly symbolic gesture, as such treatment was denied to Aurangzīb's other brothers and former rivals. Moreover, we recognise in Musta'idd Ḥān's illustration that Aurangzīb did not interpret the conflict with his brother and the subsequent execution as a break within the family, a fact highlighted by Aurangzīb's repeated visits at Dārā's grave.<sup>910</sup> Musta'idd Ḥān could have certainly spared us these repetitive references to the latter's grave if he had not been convinced of the need to describe this fraternal conflict from his individual point of view and to present his protagonist to Šāh 'Alam Bahādur not as ultra-orthodox and unforgivable but rather as a merciful ruler whose main focus was not religious matters. Instead, the author depicted him as being primarily concerned by the empire's and his family's security, a fact portrayed by highlighting the rewarding of loyal Hindu generals ahead of his most loyal Muslim nobles.

This being said, let us now turn to the analysis of the protagonist's description in order to illustrate the contrast between the two characters: in this way, we can better understand the intentions behind Musta'idd Ḥān's compilation process and narrative strategy.

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<sup>909</sup> See for example Musta'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 30, 40.

<sup>910</sup> See e.g. *idem*, 54.

## ANALYSIS 2: AURANGZĪB IN THE *‘ĀLAMGĪR-NĀMĀ* AND THE *MA’ĀSĪR-I ‘ĀLAMGĪRĪ*

In both passages of the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*, Aurangzīb is portrayed as a faithful Muslim who could no longer tolerate his brother’s immoral sins. Here, we specifically witness that the government’s policy was primarily the spread of Islam and of the divine law. Moreover, in 1.3.2, the allegories and the exuberant descriptions of Aurangzīb are striking, a stylistic choice which is missing from the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*’s first ten years almost entirely.<sup>911</sup> Here, in contrast, a remarkably sober and pragmatic tone predominates. The first quote taken here from the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* (1.4.1) is certainly one of Musta‘idd Ḥān’s more challenging characterisations, but it still cannot be compared to the generally pompous style of the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*.

Apart from the stylistic peculiarity, 1.4.1 is of great interest because it is by far the most detailed description of the protagonist’s motivations within the first ten years of the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. This extract should therefore be seen as Aurangzīb’s declaration of his government’s intentions and goals. It is clear that our author expressly endeavoured to break away from the typical description of the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*: the spread of Islām is *not* the sole and central motivation of Aurangzīb. Instead, his concern for the welfare of the farmers and soldiers is highlighted along with his focus on justice and equality. If we compare this with the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*, in which we are confronted with representations such as that in 1.3.1 on every single page, Musta‘idd Ḥān’s concept and description of a just ruler appears to be truly distinct. If we recall that the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* was written in times of great crisis (1707-1710), when rebellious peasants and soldiers reached their physical and mental limits after decades of long and wearisome wars, we understand again the text’s actual function as a mirror<sup>912</sup> for Emperor Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur and as a repository of proposals for concrete reforms. Even if the present description of Aurangzīb does not correspond to the historical facts, we nevertheless can see the concept of a just ruler to which Muslim intellectuals at the beginning of the eighteenth century adhered. In our present case, this did not mean the simple and violent spread of Islām or the constant proclamation of a *Ġihād*.

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<sup>911</sup> See Alvi’s remarks on the complications by translating the *Ālamgīr-nāma*: ‘(...) Because of Kāzīm’s complicated and hyperbolic style, it is difficult to do a close and readable translation’; Alvi, *The Historians of Awrangzeb*, 62, also Elliot, *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, vol. 7, 177.

<sup>912</sup> Regarding this specific type of genre, see Conermann, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*, 361 f.; also Alam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 312.

Of course, religion is a factor here, but we certainly do not read that it should be imposed by force on others; rather, Musta‘idd Ḥān depicts an Aurangzīb focused primarily on the ‘*spread of justice (...)*’ to increase ‘*the general happiness*’. Then, finally, there is the notion of empire in 1.4.2: the edicts mentioned here were distributed across the kingdom immediately after Aurangzīb had been officially proclaimed as the new emperor. Even here, Musta‘idd Ḥān informs his recipients that the ‘happy news of the protection and enjoyment of the whole kingdom’ served Aurangzīb as a maxim, and not the forceful spread of the faith.

If we compare the present excerpt with the one from the *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*, we additionally notice that Musta‘idd Ḥān again emphasises the discipline and work ethic of a ruler who did not allow himself a single second of rest. Here, there is no celebration of a god-like ruler whose legitimacy of rule was based on sumptuous ceremony and luxury (unlike among many baroque rulers in contemporary Europe who propagated just such an image as a crucial and directed legitimisation of their rule),<sup>913</sup> but rather a pragmatic, hard-working, and disciplined ruler, who devoted himself constantly to the tasks of his empire.<sup>914</sup>

Furthermore, this explicit emphasis on work and discipline serves our author as a way to increase sympathy towards his protagonist and absolve him of his errors in hindsight. From this point on, Musta‘idd Ḥān consistently describes Aurangzīb primarily as a disciplined and austere ruler. This specific characterisation is of especial importance when we learn in the next two excerpts that Aurangzīb was exposed to strong opposition and criticisms from the beginning of his reign. In 1.4.3, the population rejects the newly established celebrations of the empire and instead prefer fasting; thus, the festivities had to be postponed. Equally, when Aurangzīb decided to abolish the road tolls in 1.4.4, Musta‘idd Ḥān delivers harsh criticism: ‘you can not imagine what was thus given up of the kingdom’s income.’

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<sup>913</sup> See, for example, a contemporary German example in around 1700 in Benedikt Mauer (ed.), *Barocke Herrschaft am Rhein um 1700*, Düsseldorf, 2009.

<sup>914</sup> A comparative analysis of the legitimisation and symbols of rule of Aurangzīb and Friedrich II ‘the Great’ (gov. 1740-1786), who came to power in Prussia almost 30 years later and who is repeatedly glorified for his soldierly and disciplined rule could provide very interesting results. This might be particularly sagacious given the fact that Friedrich’s qualities have been repeatedly held to represent a Western and rationalist attitude towards government in the eighteenth century, most recently by Niall Ferguson, who makes a comparison between Friedrich as an enlightened servant of the state and his harem-loving Ottoman contemporaries. See idem, *The West and the Rest*, London, 2011.

Therefore, our author was very well aware of Aurangzīb's mistakes and by no means concealed them; indeed, he decided to let critical voices speak when he had the opportunity.

Here, we not only see the increased confidence of our author, who must have been accustomed to express his opinion openly. We also find, in this explicit emphasis on Aurangzīb's errors, an essential part of Musta'idd Ḥān's narrative strategy. In the next two quotations (1.4.5 and 1.4.6), we see that Musta'idd Ḥān represents Aurangzīb as the victim of his text. We also read in the *Ālamgīr-nāma* that the conflicts were imposed on Aurangzīb from the very beginning, and that the ruler responded by seeking peaceful solutions. However, in this extract, we learn less about the emotional suffering of the protagonist in the *Ālamgīr-nāma*. However, in 1.4.5 and 1.4.6, we see the extraordinary number of threatening conflicts to which Aurangzīb was exposed and the pain he felt when he heard of his soldiers' deaths. Musta'idd Ḥān therefore initiates in 1.4.6 the process of the king's anthropomorphisation,<sup>915</sup> which will characterise the second part of the *Ma'āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*. From this point on, it becomes increasingly transparent that Aurangzīb had reached his limits, as his grieving heart affects his direct speech and description almost every year. On the other hand, within the first ten years of the text's coverage, there are only two very short sections where the ruler expresses positive emotions.<sup>916</sup>

While it would certainly be wrong to speak directly at this point of the protagonist's melancholy, as the emotion expressed here probably does not correspond to the early modern European concept of *melancholia* that was a crucial factor for its nobilities' public staging, we nevertheless continue to witness the fact that our author deliberately presents a grieving and isolated ruler who constantly retreats from courtly festivities into solitude. Thus, the Arabic concept from the tenth-century intellectual Ishāq Ibn-ʿImrā and his *Maqāla fī l-mālīḥūliyā* (*Treatise on Melancholy*) seems initially to have many conceptual parallels to early modern European discussions on this particular subject.<sup>917</sup>

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<sup>915</sup> See Birgit Kehne, *Formen und Funktionen der Anthropomorphisierung in Reineke-Fuchs-Dichtungen*, Frankfurt/Main, 1992.

<sup>916</sup> Mustai'dd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*, 38 und 23.

<sup>917</sup> For a detailed discussion of Ishāq Ibn-ʿImrā's concept of melancholy, see idem, *Maqāla fī l-mālīḥūliyā*. On his study, see Thomas Bauer, *Alltagsleben und materielle Kultur in der arabischen Sprache und Literatur*, Wiesbaden, 2005, 98 f., also Karl Gabers, *Ishāq Ibn-ʿImrān. Maqāla fī l-mālīḥūliyā (Abhandlung über die Melancholie)*, Hamburg, 1977; Ian Almond, 'Islam, Melancholy, and Sad, Concrete Minarets. The Futility of Narratives in Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book*' in *New Literary History*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2003), 75-90; idem, 'Post-Colonial Melancholy. An Examination of Sadness in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*' in *Orbis Litterarum*, vol. 59, no. 2 (2004), 90-99. On early modern German texts, see Julia Schreiner, *Jenseits vom Glück. Suizid, Melancholie und Hypochondrie in deutschsprachigen Texten des späten 18. Jahrhunderts*, Munich, 2003; Christian Heinrich Spieß, *Biographien der Selbstmörder*, Göttingen, 2005; Vera Lind, *Selbstmord in der Frühen*

Consequently, it is this specific mixture of victimhood, work ethic, and constant grieving that Musta‘idd Ḥān uses to depict his ruler and his actions and mistakes to his descendant in a meaningful way. This mixture makes it much easier for the recipient to forgive Aurangzīb’s errors throughout the narrative. Our author also cleverly avoids reporting the advantages of Aurangzīb’s youth and his physical strength. This specific characterisation facilitated the identification of the aged Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur with the protagonist.<sup>918</sup> This specific reader was thus encouraged to forgive his predecessor his failures, even though he now had to carry the can. Hence, it would have been a very bad strategy to present a young and happy Aurangzīb who left a crisis-laden empire to his son, who certainly would have had much less sympathy and understanding for such a protagonist. In contrast, it was far easier to sympathise with an overburdened protagonist, who, as the years pass by in the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, only incites pity.<sup>919</sup>

Let us now begin the second section of the compilation analysis. Here, we will discuss a very delicate issue that has been repeatedly used to describe Aurangzīb as an ultra-orthodox bigot: his (alleged) ban of music.

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*Neuzeit. Diskurs, Lebenswelt und kultureller Wandel am Beispiel der Herzogtümer Schleswig und Holstein*, Göttingen, 1999.

<sup>918</sup> Faruqi, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire*, 309.

<sup>919</sup> In detail Verena Barthel, *Empathie, Mitleid, Sympathie. Rezeptionslenkende Strukturen mittelalterlicher Texte in Bearbeitungen des Willehalm-Stoffs*, Berlin, 2008, especially 30 f.



## SECTION 2: AURANGZĪB AND THE BAN ON MUSIC IN THE IN THE *MIR'ĀT AL-ĀLAM* AND THE *MA'ĀṢIR-I ĀLAMGĪRĪ* - A GENERAL PROHIBITION OR PRIVATE RENUNCIATION?

In addition to temple destruction, Aurangzīb's ban on music in the eleventh year of his reign has been repeatedly used to demonstrate his allegedly ultra-orthodox religious policy. Only recently has Katherine Brown specifically questioned the long-standing and consolidated assumption of a general ban on music in Aurangzīb's entire realm.<sup>920</sup> Thanks to an excellent analysis of the sources, Brown demonstrates that Aurangzīb's decision to abolish the music at the court in 1668/69 was a private decision of the ruler and was not transferred to the rest of Mughal India. It additionally appears that his decision was made to appease powerful religious scholars who gained influence before his seizure of power in the reign of Šāh Ġāhān. Aurangzīb was also seeking a specific identity for his reign, hoping to find new forms of legitimization.

In the following section, we will not quote from the *Ālamgīr-nāma* as a template for the *Ma'āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*, but from Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān's *Mir'āt al-ālam*. It is this text that corresponds most closely to what Aurangzīb's personal view of his own sovereignty may have been, since it was the only sanctioned text that corresponds to the *tarīḥ*-genre and to whose publication he agreed after his earlier closure of the office of court chronicler.

### 2.1 The ban on music in the *Mir'āt al-ālam*

(2.1.1) (And) Although he had gathered at the foot of his throne singers who had lovely voices and were skilled instrumentalists and to whose singing and acting he had been listening in the beginning of his reign temporarily, he now abstained for several years from this pleasure, due to his self-control and self-denial (...) even though he knew a lot about music. If now a singer was ashamed when he was summoned by him, he (nevertheless) supported them financially or gave land for their stay (...) Mīrzā Mukarram Ḥān Safavī, an expert of the musical arts, once asked his Majesty, how he considers it with music - the ruler (then) replied in Arabic: 'It is permissible - and neither good nor bad. Then, the Ḥān asked: 'And what is in his (the ruler's) opinion most appropriate to be heard?' The ruler replied: 'I cannot listen to any music without instruments, especially when they are played without the *Paḥawāğ*

<sup>920</sup> See Brown, *Did Aurangzeb Ban Music*.

(a small, two-sided drum, being especially popular and widespread during Akbar's rule) - but it is unanimously forbidden ( <i>ḥarām</i> ); so I have stopped (doing that) listening to the singing. <sup>921</sup>
2.2 The ban on music in the <i>Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī</i>
(2.2.1) As the emperor took no pleasure in enjoyment and he only sacrificed to (his) duties, he had no time for festivities. Thusly, he ordered the most important musicians Ḥuṣḥāl Ḥān, Bisrām Ḥān, Rāsbīn and others, and although they were allowed to come to the court, that the playing of music was refrained - in the end, music was completely prohibited. <sup>922</sup>
(2.2.2) Upon the ruler's arrival the Prince came towards him, meeting him outside the (his) band-room of the musicians. <sup>923</sup>
(2.2.3) Musicians and singers were excluded from the court - but the group of musicians kept on playing merrily, just as they (always) did before (...) <sup>924</sup>
(2.2.4) The festive decorations were taken down (a). It was ordered to the officers of the band-room that the music of the ceremony, which otherwise played throughout the day, should insert (only) after three hours - just as during the Sunday celebrations (b). Baḥtāvar Ḥān, <i>dāgūga-yi ḥavāṣṣān</i> (superintendent of slaves), received a dagger with a crystal handle (c). <sup>925</sup>
(2.2.5) Bisrām Ḥān, the leading musician, died. His son, (...) received robes, as did the musician Ḥuṣḥāl Ḥān. <sup>926</sup>

<sup>921</sup> This quotation of the *Mir'āt al- 'ālam* is based on Elliot, *The History of India*, vol. VII, 157; see also Brown, *Did Aurangzeb ban Music*, 101.

<sup>922</sup> Mustai'dd Ḥān, *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 71.

<sup>923</sup> Idem, 79.

<sup>924</sup> Idem, 81

<sup>925</sup> Idem, 98.

<sup>926</sup> Idem, 109.

## ANALYSIS

Let us begin with a comparison of the first two passages from the *Mir'āt al-ālam* and *Ma'āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*, where both authors mention the ban on music for the first time (2.1.1 and 2.2.1). We see that both quotations emphasise the ruler's work ethic and his self-abstention as the main reasons for the prohibition of music. However, it is already interesting to see that Aurangzīb was supposed to know a lot about music. This shows us, as Muḥammad Baḥtāvar wants us to believe, that the ruler had previously engaged with this activity and obviously experienced joy from it.

We also read that the *Paḥawāḡ* pleased him in particular. This was actually one of the favourite instruments of his prominent predecessor Akbar, who assembled favourite singers like Tansen (1506-1589) around him and was generally accompanied by the star of the *Paḥawāḡ*-scene, Bhagwan Aima Paḥawāḡī (died unknown),<sup>927</sup> all of which is mentioned in detail in Abū 'l-Faḡl's *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, certainly a text familiar to Aurangzīb.<sup>928</sup> Given that the latter is generally portrayed as the opposite of Akbar, this explicit highlighting of Akbar's favourite instruments is key. At this point, however, it should also be noted that even Akbar staged regular fasts in his reign, often withdrawing from worldly enjoyment and pleasure. Although he liked such music, he listened to it only for very specific purposes, as we see now in Aurangzīb's sanctioned chronicle. Brown argues that:

[The] idea that music should not be permitted to interfere with a man's serious duties was the consensus of Mughal male culture from at least Akbar's reign (...) However, Aurangzīb's declaration that music is permissible indicates that his personal renunciation was not intended to be forced upon other patron - connoisseurs.<sup>929</sup>

Thus, Aurangzīb's private renunciation of music no longer seems so spectacularly puritanical, but was rather a return to the legacy of his successful and open-minded great-grandfather. Moving on, we see that the basic statement from the *Mir'āt al-ālam* is recited almost verbatim in the *Ma'āṣir-i Ālamgīrī*'s next five points. However, the first phrase of 2.2.1 stands out ('*music was completely prohibited*'). From this phrase, a general ban on and condemnation of music could easily be interpreted. However, this assumption is significantly revised in the subsequent phrases (2.2.2 - 2.2.5). It is here where we discover the text's complexity and its multiple layers.

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<sup>927</sup> Bonnie Wade, *Imaging Sound*, 117.

<sup>928</sup> Idem, 29, 183.

<sup>929</sup> Brown, *Did Aurangzeb Ban Music*, idem, 'If Music Be the Food of Love. Masculinity and Eroticism in the Mughal '*Mehfil*' in Francesca Orsini (ed.), *Love in South Asia. A Cultural History*, Cambridge, 2006, 61-83.

It appears that Musta‘idd Hān wanted to play into the hands of his orthodox recipients, soothing them and then leaving this controversial point as quickly as possible. Therefore, in the first phrase of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* (2.2.1), we might have found excellent evidence of a dominant orthodox Islamic attitude at the Mughal court between 1707 and 1710. Had 2.2.1, which leaves only very little room for other interpretations, been the only excerpt dealing with this issue, we would have rightly assumed that our author wanted only to react to the needs of the empire’s conservative and religious readers. However, this is not the case. Rather, it becomes clear in the following four sentences that the author was specifically oriented to the basic statements of the *Mir‘āt al-‘ālam*, which apparently do not report about a *ban* on music but rather Aurangzīb’s private *renunciation*. This is particularly evident in the following excerpts.

On Aurangzīb’s arrival at the court (2.2.2), we read that his son and his entourage received the ruler *in front* of the son’s own band room. The mentioning of the *band* room shows that music was still allowed in spaces to which Aurangzīb had no access or where he was not directly present. Aurangzīb could have simply insisted upon entering the room, thus banning the music in general if he had wanted to do so. Therefore, this phrase is crucial, as it gives us an excellent understanding of the particular image that Musta‘idd Hān designed of his former ruler. He could have had described this encounter entirely differently by portraying an all-powerful ruler who insisted on the strict observance of his commandments, rigorously prohibiting music in general. Musta‘idd Hān could have also skipped this anecdote, as it ultimately had no historical significance except for specifically supporting the author’s intention to portray Aurangzīb as a conscientious and flexible ruler. He was conscientious in the sense that he remained steadfast and did not enter the music room and its worldly pleasures, and flexible because he does not condemn his son and allowed him to stay in a space that he personally preferred to avoid.

It therefore seems that Aurangzīb’s versatility was transferred to the whole court. This becomes obvious in 2.2.3: despite the ‘ban’ on musicians entering the innermost sanctuaries of the palace (i.e. the private area of the ruler), the music nevertheless ‘*merrily*’ kept on playing outside in the courtyard. By highlighting quite explicitly that the musicians ‘*merrily*’ continued to play, we recognise that there was no fear of an ultra-orthodox oriental despot: as long as they stuck to the emperor’s specific commandments, artists could live a decent life under Aurangzīb.

The following section (2.2.4) is no less fruitful for our analysis. In its last phrase, we are informed that Baḥtāvar Ḥān, author of the *Mir'āt al-ʿālam*, receives a reward (c): this sentence is placed adjacent to a discussion of the music reform. Baḥtāvar Ḥān, I argue, symbolises the sanctioned work of a chronicler under Aurangzīb's rule through whom the former emperor's decision for a limited (not general) ban on music now finds a prominent advocate. It seems to me that Mustaʿidd Ḥān expressly sought to rely on this important person to substantiate the accuracy and credibility of this specific description in his *Maʿāṣir-i ʿĀlamgīrī*. The mentioning of Baḥtāvar Ḥān exactly at this point in the text in direct connection with the delicate subject of music/art is particularly interesting, since the dagger as a gift was probably not the only reason for presenting the Ḥān here, especially since this event took place more than 35 years before the writing of the *Maʿāṣir-i ʿĀlamgīrī*. Rather, our author was most certainly aware of the decision's significance and was now obviously trying not only to copy his main template, the *Mir'āt al-ʿālam*, but also to incorporate the basic statement meaningfully into his own narrative. This he did by using his exclusive position as the last survivor of Aurangzīb's three chroniclers and by placing the reputable and credible witness Baḥtāvar Ḥān in his text to affirm the truth of his own narrative.

However, it is not only Baḥtāvar Ḥān's appearance in a scene which deals with music and artists that is important: his received award is also crucial, since this gift allows 2.2.4 to end on a positive note<sup>930</sup> after phrase (a) rather disappointed the recipient's expectations of a lavish party (all of the ornaments were supposed to be taken down). This final reward reinforces the positive mood of both settings (b and c) and is therefore of particular significance, since Mustaʿidd Ḥān generally structured his text in such a way that the recipient is often confronted alternately and abruptly with happy and unfortunate events. Mustaʿidd Ḥān could have thus simply reported in the phase immediately following the music reform (b) a natural disaster and the deaths of hundreds of peasants or the manifestation of a monster (as he often does) to encase the phrase with negative anecdotes and events. In this way, the discussion about music reform would have ended with a negative event<sup>931</sup> and would have been mentioned in the context of threatening scenarios and catastrophes. If the author designed 2.2.4 in this way, the emperor's decision to *limit* the public listening to music at the court (again, not to generally *ban* it) would *not* have appeared in a good light. However, as we have

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<sup>930</sup> Regarding the definitions of a positive event and 'potentially positive events', see Catherine Haden, *Autobiographical Memory and the Construction of a Narrative Self. Developmental and Cultural Perspectives*, Mahwah, 2003, 44 f.; also Jörg Schönert, et al., *Lyrik und Narratologie. Text-Analysen zu deutschsprachigen Gedichten vom 16. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, 2007, 225.

<sup>931</sup> Regarding the narrative's closure, please see footnote 109.

seen, he did the opposite: the emperor's decision regarding music and art has a happy ending.<sup>932</sup> We therefore see that our author, as a representative of the Muslim intellectual milieu of the early eighteenth century, did not support a general ban of the fine arts and thus did not back puritan and orthodox governance; instead, he welcomed Aurangzīb's disciplined way of ruling the empire and celebrated it as the ideal method of governance.

We should also establish that our author emphasised that the decision not to let the music play throughout the whole day was taken because it was a festival day rather than because of a religious reason. Since it is not clear which celebrations are meant and given the fact that the *Ma'āşir-i 'Ālamgīrī* often explicitly mentions imperial, but not religious, festivals,<sup>933</sup> we do not necessarily have to conclude that music was limited on a religious basis in relation to religious festivities. Although the decorations were taken down for this feast, the music was still allowed to carry on playing and therefore remained a core component of the courtly festivities, in marked contrast to religious rites like recitation of the *Qur'ān*.

Finally, let us turn to the last sentence to mention the music, the one that does so in respect to the celebrated musicians (2.2.5). In addition to reporting the death of one leading musician, Bisrām Ḥān, the general respect that Aurangzīb had for the musicians is thoroughly expressed. Here, the public gifting of a robe was an act of high symbolism and brought great honour to the recipient. It also fulfilled a crucial element in early modern Islamic and Mughal diplomacy,<sup>934</sup> as the many other examples in texts such as Jahāngīr's *Tūzūk-i Jahāngīrī* and Abū l-Faẓl 'Allāmī's *Akbar-nāmā* show. Aurangzīb himself also explicitly mentions honouring Hindu nobles with robes on the promotions in his *Rūka'āt-i 'Ālamgīrī*.<sup>935</sup> This is particularly interesting, since his tolerant ancestor Akbar once strongly advised against honouring artists in general with such high awards.

A robe of honour had to be worn by the ruler himself, if only for a moment, in order to imbue it with his power before it was given to the recipient. Such transfers of power created a ritual connection between the bestower and the recipient. Akbar himself warned: 'Anyone who presents his clothing to ignoble people, such as a rope dancers and clowns - it is as if he were to take part in their activities himself.'<sup>936</sup>

<sup>932</sup> See Thomas Christen, 'Happy Endings' in Matthias Brütsch, et al. (eds.), *Kinogefühle. Emotionalität und Film*, Marburg, 2005, 189-204.

<sup>933</sup> See e.g. Mustā'idd Ḥān, *Ma'āşir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, 26.

<sup>934</sup> Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters*, 214.

<sup>935</sup> Jamshid Bilimoria, *Rūka'āt-i-Ālamgīrī*, e.g. 1686. LETTER XVIII., 23.

<sup>936</sup> Schimmel, *The Empire of the Great Mughals*, 167.

Additionally, funerals, such as that mentioned in 2.2.5, also functioned as crucial public acts with high symbolic meaning in the Mughal public sphere.<sup>937</sup> In our quote, the son of the renowned musician is honoured by the ruler, thus making visible Aurangzīb's respect towards his family and their artistic activities in general. This is particularly emphasised by the fact that Ḥuṣḥāl Ḥān, a representative of the musicians at Aurangzīb's court, is also revered.

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<sup>937</sup> On the political dimension of the funeral see Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World*, 202.

## CONCLUSION

On the basis of two case studies, the present chapter analysed the compilation techniques and narrative strategies of the Mughal historian Muḥammad Sāqī Musta‘idd Ḥān (died 1724). His *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* (completed in 1710), which illustrates the heroic deeds of Aurangzīb Ālamgīr (reigned 1658-1707), has a bad reputation within scholarship and is primarily used to demonstrate Aurangzīb’s ultra-orthodox way of governing. However, the vast majority of previous investigations into this text have overlooked its complexity and approached the text in an uncritical way. They have also ignored the social circumstances and complex conditions under which our author wrote.

However, the present study has shown that we would heavily misjudge Musta‘idd Ḥān and his milieu if we recognise that their only definition of a just and ideal ruler was a strictly orthodox Muslim who took violence against other religions for granted. Rather, it becomes clear that our author tried hard to present to his new recipient Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur (gov. 1707-1712) a protagonist whose primary goal was the expansion and security of the entire empire, including the protection and promotion of loyal non-Muslims so long as they subordinated themselves to his will as universal ruler.

Our author was a leading member of the elite Indo-Muslim intellectual milieu of the early eighteenth century and had among his *munṣī*-colleagues and friends many important Hindu scholars who expressed, with a growing collective self-confidence, their own opinion about the past and its actors in the growing Mughal public sphere. In this environment and in times of a deep structural crisis of the empire, Musta‘idd Ḥān skilfully created in his *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* a new concept of an ideal ruler.

This new concept showed the Hindus not primarily as enemies and infidels but often as loyal allies who Aurangzīb could trust. Thus an example of what should be done by the empire’s future rulers was set.

Therefore, Musta‘idd Ḥān did not leave a text in which the religion was the only basis of all of the ruler’s decisions. Rather, he put forward the notion of empire as an entity that both should provide protection to all of its subjects and serve as a career option for anyone who kept to the rules of the dynasty. As we have seen in our two case studies, our author had several opportunities, if he would have wished so, to present the decisions of his ruler as decidedly Islamic or simply retell the basic statements of prominent textual testimonies, such as the *Ālamgīr-nāma*. This, for example, is evident in the representation of the two brotherly



competitors Dārā and Aurangzīb: through his techniques of compilation, Musta‘idd Ḥān obviously tried hard to withdraw religion from the conflict as best he could. Although the religious components regarding Aurangzīb’s legitimisation of rule are important in the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, it is crucial that each time religious arguments are brought forward, other reasons are immediately cited as well: these appear to Musta‘idd Ḥān at least as important in the pursuit of just rule.

Through the analysis of the author’s techniques of compilation in terms of the presentation of the characters, it is thus clear that Musta‘idd Ḥān *did not* designate Islām as the emperor’s sole legitimation, nor was its violent spread the protagonist’s primary mandate of rule. Rather, in Musta‘idd Ḥān’s first and most detailed depiction of the king, we encounter a protagonist who imposed upon himself numerous significant obligations in addition to the preservation of religion. Hence, I argue that there is no hint of a deliberately chosen and consequently ultra-orthodox government in the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*.

Therefore, our author was in clear contrast to the prominent and influential Muḥammad Kāzīm and other intellectuals, who regarded religion as the essential legitimation of rule. Most probably, this crucial decision should be attributed to the new collective self-confidence of our author and his milieu, particularly his successful Hindu *munṣī* colleagues with whom he was in a daily contact. However, if Musta‘idd Ḥān liked a representation of his predecessors, he adopted it into his text as part of his narrative strategy. This is especially clear in regard to the famous ‘*ban on music*’, in which our author not only largely applied Muḥammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān’s report but also even reinforced Baḥtāvar Ḥān’s lenient version of the ban in several places, despite his initial complaints of a lack of space. Thus, he clearly positioned himself against a general ban on music.

Whether Mustai’dd Ḥān’s *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* really corresponds to the historical truth remains questionable, but the question plays a rather minor role in the present analysis. Instead, we dealt with the question of what specific type of ruler our early eighteenth-century author designed and wanted to pass on to his new patron Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur as an example of righteous action and a definition of a just Muslim ruler. Mustai’dd Ḥān’s protagonist is not a fanatical destroyer of temples but a pragmatic and disciplined Muslim who constantly focused on his work and who counterpoised the pompous lifestyle of his predecessor with a sober, pragmatic life and mode of government. His most loyal generals were often Hindus, whom he invested with gifts even before his Muslim nobles.

The *Ma'āšir-i 'Ālamgīrī* is therefore not primarily a text that solely reports about the past but should rather be read as an Agenda 1710. It served the new emperor Šāh 'Ālam Bahādur as a future-oriented text, namely as a guide to the right and just way to govern his empire, which had been shaken by great crises. However, Musta'idd Ḥān's agenda, like so many others, was not ultimately successful from a long-term perspective, despite all of his efforts.

## FINAL CONCLUSION

*‘Vous pensez... Vous pensez que je suis quelqu'un qui pourrait se convertir à l'Islam?’ - Il pencha la tête vers le bas, comme s'il s'abîmait dans d'intenses réflexions personnelles; puis, relevant son regard vers moi, il répondit: ‘Oui’ - Michel Houellebecq.<sup>938</sup>*

When I decided to start a narratological analysis of *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī*, I had no idea where the journey would take me. However, I was fairly well informed about the text's protagonist, the Mughal 'bad guy' Aurangzīb 'Ālamgīr. As I held the official chronicle of this mighty ruler in my hands, I anticipated that his controversial anti-Hindu campaigns would be celebrated and praised: after only a short investigation, it was apparent that my expectations were right. Given that most other scholars characterised the chronicle as being of an inferior quality, with a strikingly monotonous structure compared to its prominent predecessors, it made sense that the only reason one would work with the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* was to document Aurangzīb's violent crackdown against the Hindus. This is certainly what many researchers have done: especially after its translation by Jadunath Sarkar in 1947, the *Ma'āṣir-i 'Ālamgīrī* became one of the most important sources for writing about Aurangzīb's desecrations of temples.

This commonsensical view startled me, not least because this academic consensus completely corresponded to Sarkar's line of thought. He was a man who was recently characterised as a 'happy neo-colonialist': he played a decisive role in the development of a simplified image of Aurangzīb and the decline of the Mughal Empire. It soon emerged that he had indeed intervened in the text and altered the author's original intention significantly. When it came to the analysis of chronicles, I already had some experience of how much recent research has been able to significantly revise some long-standing historiographical narratives and provide new and convincing interpretations. It was particularly surprising to me that authors were willing to apply new methods to sources about which it was supposed that everything important had already been said.

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<sup>938</sup> Houellebecq, *Soumission*, 249.

This is mainly the case in the field of modern exegetics,<sup>939</sup> as well as in the historiography surrounding ancient sources.<sup>940</sup> Even with respect to the analysis of classical Islamic texts, some research has achieved new and important results.<sup>941</sup> Last but not least, within the field of Mughal historiography, two recent studies on this topic have presented completely new interpretations of chronicles, each in their own way.<sup>942</sup> These texts had not been the subjects of detailed analysis since they were edited and translated by (mainly) British historians in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, men who were often employees of the British army or their administration. Therefore, it was apparent that many had believed that there was no need for any further investigation after these British translations and editions.

With this requisite knowledge, I made my first attempts to analyse the source. I noticed relatively quickly that the author and his text had much more to offer than had been previously suggested. Two aspects convinced me to devote a few years of work to this source and its author. Firstly, there was Musta‘idd Ḥān’s brief reference at the very beginning of his text to the fact that Aurangzīb had made a wise decision when he displayed confidence in strong and loyal Hindu leaders by entrusting them with the command of a decisive attack against his brother Dārā. As we should remember, this was a decision of utmost importance, as there remained a real danger that they and their soldiers would switch sides. At the same time, I started reading the latest studies about our author’s milieu, the world of the *munšīs*. Here, one common message quickly caught my attention:<sup>943</sup> the *munšī* milieu of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was primarily characterised by a new collective self-esteem. It seems logical to assume that Musta‘idd Ḥān, who spent many years in this milieu, also showed at least some confidence when he expressed his individual conception of the reign of Aurangzīb ‘Ālamgīr, probably the most controversial ruler of the Mughals. Therefore, might it not be the case that the author’s self-confidence and his actual intention are made manifest through the use of sentences like the short hint about Aurangzīb’s wise alliance with the Hindus? These thoughts fascinated me, and I could not let them go. In the following conclusion, I seek to summarise briefly the main statements of my thesis.

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<sup>939</sup> First of all Finnen, *Narratologie und biblische Exegese*; Ute Eisen, *Die Poetik der Apostelgeschichte*. In regards to Qur’anic exegesis, see Stefan Wild, *Mensch, Prophet und Gott im Koran*; Angelika Neuwirth, *Studien zur Komposition der mekkanischen Suren*; John Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*.

<sup>940</sup> See De Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the Odyssey*; Grethlein, *Narratology and Interpretation*; Hausmann, *Die Leserlenkung durch Tacitus in den Tiberius- und Claudiusbüchern der “Annalen”*; Dewald, *Thucydides’ War Narrative*; Baragwanath, *Myth, Truth, and Narrative in Herodotus*.

<sup>941</sup> Özkan, *Narrativität im Kitāb al-Farağ ba’da š-šidda des Abū ‘Alī al-Muḥassin at-Tanūhī*.

<sup>942</sup> Conermann, *Historiographie als Sinnstiftung*; Purnaqqcheband, *Strategien der Kontingenzbewältigung*.

<sup>943</sup> Kinra, *Writing Self, Writing Empire*; Alam/Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World*.

Musta‘idd Ḥān’s milieu was shaped by the fact that it yielded dazzling figures such as the Hindu Čandar-bhān Brahman (died ca. 1670), who recognised early on that the time of the military nobility was coming to its end, since other, rather different qualities would be required if the empire was to flourish. In the career and person of Čandar-bhān, the three essential aspects of our author’s milieu can be found. On the one hand, there was the strong Hindu and Muslim belief in a well-functioning Mughal meritocracy. If you worked hard, you could achieve anything. Čandar-bhān embodied this perfectly, as he successfully worked as a Hindu for four Mughal rulers (Akbar (1556-1605), Jahāngīr (1605-1627), Šāh Ġāhān (1628-1658), and finally Aurangzīb ‘Ālamgīr (1658-1707)) and established himself as the new rising star of the *munšīs*, alongside their idol Abū l-Faẓl. In addition to their increased collective self-confidence and their belief in the Mughal meritocracy, our author’s milieu was characterised by a very high degree of tolerance. Ideally, anyone, whether Hindu or Muslim, could attain the highest positions so long as they demonstrated sufficient loyalty and competence.

As has been shown in the present study, all three tendencies (self-confidence, belief in meritocracy, and a high degree of cultural tolerance towards Hindus) appear in Musta‘idd Ḥān’s *Ma‘āšir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. The author’s self-confidence is visible in his surprising self-positioning in the text. He does this by deploying specific anecdotes, which at first seem to be historically irrelevant and therefore have been completely ignored by research. However, it is here that we recognise how keen Musta‘idd Ḥān was to take on the role of the protagonist, at least for a short time (e.g. in the mill anecdote). He also understood that he should save a prominent place for his friends at the beginning of the text’s second part, which he did by placing them in the exclusive setting of the melon garden. This specific setting demonstrated the wealth of his acquaintances: it is also here where our author allows his colleagues to act confidently towards nobles, whom they interrupt during dinner. In these apparently irrelevant anecdotes, Musta‘idd Ḥān worked with allusions and symbols (for example, the melon and the importance of the food) in order to evoke the interest of his targeted recipients.

In turn, the high tolerance of the *munšī* milieu is made apparent by the author’s numerous, although often cautious, attempts to demonstrate that many Hindus made common cause with the empire and brought forth loyal fighters who decisively contributed to its expansion. Musta‘idd Ḥān not only underlines this by exhibiting Aurangzīb’s alliance with the Hindus through the short sentence at the very beginning of the text, but also by using the vast

majority of the chapters to report about the reward and promotion of loyal Hindus. Sometimes Hindus are expressly promoted ahead of their Muslim colleagues, since they receive much more exclusive gifts.

Finally, Musta‘idd Ḥān’s belief in the Mughal meritocracy, the third characteristic of his milieu, is shown immediately at the beginning of the text’s second half. Here it becomes clear that our author in no way wanted to be understood as a blind careerist who slavishly obeyed the whims of his ruler. Rather, this section proves that he must have been aware that he had been socialised in one of the most exclusive environments that the Mughal Empire had to offer. He was certainly not willing to accept any job immediately, regardless of how promising it might have sounded: it had to be a task which served his own interests. Thus, he accepted the new job as chronicler only after long consideration and the repeated insistence of the powerful ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān.

Bearing the high tolerance of the *munšī* milieu in mind, we should assume that our author had a very conflicted opinion about Aurangzīb’s rule. However, this was not the only reason for him to be circumspect with regard to the previous reign: the times could not have been worse for Musta‘idd Ḥān to design a hymn of praise for Aurangzīb. Here the author’s complicated *Sitz im Leben* comes into play. As soon as Musta‘idd Ḥān took up his pen in 1707 to start his work on the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, the most violent crisis for decades broke out and unsettled the empire. For all of this, his protagonist was not entirely innocent, a fact of which Musta‘idd Ḥān must have been aware. After all, it was Aurangzīb’s cultural policies, which had already provoked fierce criticism in his lifetime, that now constituted the spark of the rebellion. Even if the latest research has shown that these actions were often not primarily intended as discriminations against the Hindus but were rather disciplinary measures against insurgents who happened to be Hindu, they nevertheless had a decisive effect on the many rebellions against the empire that erupted in 1707. In this sense, Musta‘idd Ḥān was simply not able to constantly glorify Aurangzīb’s actions, since his successor Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur, the text’s intended recipient, now had to deal with the consequences of his predecessor’s mistakes. Considering all of this, we should expect a text which overflows with criticisms of Aurangzīb; however, this is not the case. So how did Musta‘idd Ḥān handle this tricky situation?

First and foremost, the author’s own career should be cited as a possible reason for why he experienced Aurangzīb as flexible ruler rather than as a continually violent tyrant. This was already clear to him long before he started his work on the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. In 1685, Aurangzīb permitted the publication of the *Mir‘āt al-‘ālam* after the death of Musta‘idd Ḥān’s

foster father Muhammad Baḥtāvar Ḥān and after Muḥammad Kāẓim had previously had to give up his work on the nearly 1,000 page-long *Ālamgīr-nāma*. The exclusive right to be allowed to continue his work as one of the only sanctioned chroniclers after so many celebrities had failed certainly meant that Mustaʿidd Ḥān did not perceive Aurangzīb as a despot whom he sought to constantly criticise in his official chronicle.

Of course, the author's intended recipient Šāh ʿĀlam Bahādur also played an important role in the formation of the text after he took over the empire in 1707 as the new ruler in Delhi and Agra. At first sight, he would have been the first to accept a chronicle in which his father was taken to task for his errors. As his son and successor, he came to the throne at the venerable age of 64. From the very beginning of his reign, he constantly had to struggle with the numerous crises which broke out after the death of his predecessor, who was certainly not blameless for their outbreak. However, constant harsh criticism would not be appropriate in such an important text, which stood in the long tradition of official Mughal chronicles. Nor could such criticism be expressed directly: the new ruler was committed to the norms of his heritage. Although he had won the throne, as was the custom, in a fight against his brothers, a significant part of his legitimacy was based on his linear descent from his ancestors. That his father, who had shaped the fate of the empire for almost 50 years, should appear in his official chronicle in a disgraceful light was therefore impossible. This was especially the case when we remember that Šāh ʿĀlam Bahādur was an integral part of the narrative of the *Maʿāẓir-i ʿĀlamgīrī*, which meant that he too, as a young prince, actively participated in the empire's expansion and thus bore a certain portion of the responsibility for the problems this had caused.

However, the most important factor which prevented constant criticism of Aurangzīb in the *Maʿāẓir-i ʿĀlamgīrī* was the chronicle's patron, the influential ʿInāyat Allāh Ḥān. He had been a hawk during Aurangzīb's reign and remained a decisive actor afterwards: he was a strong force behind the reintroduction of *ḡizya* in 1679, certainly one of the most controversial decisions in Aurangzīb's lifetime. Together with his allies, he still advocated Aurangzīb's generally conservative attitudes and even managed to expand his network and influence. Hence, we may well assume that this patron did everything in his power to ensure that his powerful former sovereign, whom he blindly admired throughout his life, would not be continually criticised in his official chronicle. ʿInāyat Allāh Ḥān, along with his network of powerful colleagues, was therefore a strong factor preventing fervent criticism of Aurangzīb: he certainly could have simply put an end to Mustaʿidd Ḥān's future career in the post-

Aurangzīb era if he had wanted to do so. Therefore, it seems probable to me that it was actually ‘Ināyat Allāh Ḥān who insisted that clear anti-Hindu passages had to be placed in the text, since this was a policy with which he had identified throughout his life.

Nonetheless, the chronicle is full of indirect criticism of unprovoked violence against the Hindus, as we saw in several anecdotes where the author suggested alternatives for a new policy in the post-Aurangzīb era. So how can we explain the contradictions of the text?

This dichotomy, which is a crucial characteristic of the text, has so far only been used by academic researchers to describe this text and its author as being inferior in terms of their quality. I argue, however, that this dichotomy in fact offers a great opportunity for an alternative interpretation. The *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* should be considered less as a backward-looking chronicle and more as a mirror for its time of origin, the interesting period of transition immediately after Aurangzīb’s death (1707-1710), which, as we know, was marked by terrible crises. Furthermore, through this dichotomy, we recognise the author’s divided priorities that emerged from his tricky *Sitz im Leben*: when Musta‘idd Ḥān started writing the official chronicle of Aurangzīb after the latter has passed away in 1707, he certainly had no idea of the direction in which his successor would lead the empire.

Thus, the author must have contemplated the following questions: how should he complete such a difficult task, which he had accepted only after some hesitation? Should he design a text which constantly cheered Aurangzīb’s anti-Hindu activities and describe them as the greatest deeds of a just Muslim ruler? This would have met the policy of Aurangzīb’s successor immediately at the beginning of his reign, when Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur maintained some of Aurangzīb’s discriminatory measures, such as cutting off the beards of Hindus. If Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur had kept such discriminatory policies until his death in 1712 without showing any capacity for reform, then we would have definitely received an entirely different version of the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. This is because our chronicle is not just a retrospective text which aimed to celebrate the exploits of a dead king in the classical manner. Rather, we need to understand the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* as a fluid text which the author, in order to not completely alienate Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur, cautiously shaped so as to fit the latter’s constantly changing operations. A good example is the totally unexpected appearance of the twelve courageous Mughal warriors, whose fate strongly reminds one of the twelve šī‘it imams. On the one hand, the author skilfully works with important symbols in order to win the attention of influential šī‘it recipients for his text: the latter gained power only shortly after the death of Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur in 1712, meaning that they had been able to expand their networks at court during



Musta‘idd Hān’s writing process. Most importantly, however, this brief anecdote about the brave twelve Mughal warriors was actually Musta‘idd Hān’s cautious and indirect response to Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur’s approach to the Šī‘its. In 1709, just as Musta‘idd Hān was in the middle of writing his chronicle, the new ruler suddenly decided to give significant concessions to the Šī‘its by ordering that the Friday prayer in Lahore was to be held in the šī‘it’s manner (something which would have been impossible under Aurangzīb).

It is in these very short anecdotes, which are sprinkled throughout the text, that we witness Musta‘idd Hān’s endeavours to react to Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur’s political decisions in a prudent manner, as he did not know if his recipient would switch course later on. In fact, this is exactly what happened in the case of Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur’s approach to the Šī‘its. Shortly before his death in 1711, Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur had to personally face the fierce criticism which his decision had caused when he went to Lahore to have intensive talks with Sunni intellectuals there. In this sense, these sections of the text, which certainly seem contradictory and unimportant at first glance, should not be stamped as historically irrelevant. Rather, they bear witness to the author’s need to respond in a variety of ways to the new ruler’s frequently fickle policies. These passages often contain numerous symbols, which, understandably, have no meaning for untrained readers of the English translation of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*. However, they were of great importance to contemporaneous recipients: if we are to follow the argumentation in the influential study *Textures of Time*, these individuals most certainly understood such symbolic references. Therefore, a detailed analysis of these dichotomous sections and with their unique symbols allows us to look behind the text and thus better understand the text’s social energy, the author’s former intentions, and his highly skilled narrative strategy.

The goal of the present work was to break down, as much as possible, Musta‘idd Hān’s specific narrative strategy. This can only be done by means of a detailed analysis of the author’s *Sitz im Leben*, which I presented in the first chapter. This chapter discusses Musta‘idd Hān’s difficult position when he started the prestigious project of composing the first official chronicle about the reign of Aurangzīb ‘Ālamgīr. On the one hand, there was the increased confidence of Musta‘idd Hān and his colleagues, their shared knowledge that after Aurangzīb’s death much would need to be changed, and, finally, the author’s will to put this sentiment into print (take, for instance, the harsh and direct criticism of Aurangzīb’s decision to abolish the road tolls). On the other hand, there was the standard of the genre and the author’s conflicted situation, both of which forced him to fluctuate between glorifying and

criticising Aurangzīb. Finally, there was the complicated situation of his intended recipient and political master. Undoubtedly, other Mughal chroniclers before him had certainly had it much easier.

However, what clearly distinguishes Musta‘idd Hān is the fact that he did not surrender in the face of the difficulties of this task, but rather embraced them and achieved several different goals. He was able to directly and confidently place himself in the text to represent his opinions and those of his *munšī* colleagues. He also managed to leave a personal touch on the narrative. This often included indirect alternative proposals for the new government, as well as oblique criticisms of the previous one. Finally, he also avoided provoking any of the influential nobles at the Mughal court: his career reached new heights after submitting the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* in 1710. The only way he achieved all of this was his ability to use a sophisticated narrative strategy, one which allowed him to bypass most of the obstacles which he had to face as the author of such a prestigious official project.

In the second chapter, I made it clear that Musta‘idd Hān created a sophisticated permanent state of emergency which was ultimately directed against all Mughals and which spared nothing and no one. Monsters appeared, dangers lurked everywhere, and nature in general posed a constant threat to the Mughals. Here, Musta‘idd Hān skilfully used narrative tools such as tension in order to place his diverse recipients (influential Sunnis, Šī‘its, Hindus, and of course Šāh ‘Ālam Bahādur) under the spell of his narrative. Furthermore, this permanent state of emergency presented the protagonists of the text, Aurangzīb ‘Ālamgīr and his closest allies, as the narrative’s real victims from its very outset. Thus, the recipients had to evaluate their decisions from the victim’s perspective, which made it much easier to forgive their mistakes, especially their aggressive behaviour towards the Hindus.

The discussion of Musta‘idd Hān’s narrative strategy continued in the third chapter. Here, I presented a detailed investigation of the design of the narrative’s protagonist, Aurangzīb ‘Ālamgīr. I sought to argue that Musta‘idd Hān did not portray the ideal Muslim ruler, embodied in Aurangzīb, as an ultra-conservative ruler who fought all non-Muslim institutions by any means necessary and without any legitimate reason. Rather, our author portrayed an often desperate, isolated, and even melancholic ruler who tried hard to preserve the security of his kingdom. However, he was ultimately condemned to failure, which Musta‘idd Hān witnessed after his death in 1707 with the outbreak of numerous rebellions. Musta‘idd Hān designed the protagonist’s failure to be tragic, as we see in one of his last direct speeches at the end of the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*.

In addition to the protagonist's loneliness and fear of failure, Musta'idd Hān provided Aurangzīb with an outstanding work ethic: the emperor never stopped working, even during the funerals of his closest family members. Both properties, discipline and melancholy, complement each other perfectly. Finally, the closer we come to the end of the text, the more Aurangzīb appears as a human being who specifically sought contact with the narrative's other characters. From the second half of the text onwards, Musta'idd Hān used the protagonist's direct speech and reduction of the pathos of distance between him and the other characters to considerably increase sympathy for his protagonist.

The *Ma'āsir-i 'Ālamgīrī* is full of passages which seem at first glance to provide plenty of material for a traditional interpretation of the source. These sections have by no means been ignored or glossed over in my analysis. In the fourth chapter in particular, I focused on demonstrating how our author dealt with the many conflicts with which the empire was afflicted. The main purpose of Musta'idd Hān's narrative strategy, namely to pose alternatives and to revise controversial events whenever possible, is made especially evident in this chapter.

On the basis of six conflicts, which at first glance do not provide any room for alternative readings, I have shown how Musta'idd Hān tried to reinterpret these events, all of which contributed to the rebellions after Aurangzīb's death. As a chronicler of Aurangzīb's reign, Musta'idd Hān had to face these conflicts: he could not completely ignore them in order to invent a paradisiacal past. The key to my argument is that Musta'idd Hān did not simply accept these conflicts as given and then skip to the next chapter. Rather, Musta'idd Hān consistently tried to relativise these multifaceted conflicts (for example, the closure of non-Muslim institutions, the destruction of temples, or the execution of Hindus and non-believers) through two narrative techniques. I have dubbed these two techniques as the author's direct and indirect relativisations.

Musta'idd Hān often tried to incorporate a direct relativisation into any given conflict. We saw such a direct relativisation when Musta'idd Hān tried to depict the destruction of stone elephants in as unspectacular a way as possible: he expressly indicated that this decision corresponded entirely with the general Islamic understanding of art. Musta'idd Hān thus avoided having to cheer for Aurangzīb's fanatical decision; rather, he tried to legitimise it rationally, based on a general understanding of traditional law. Furthermore, in this section, the role of the text as a mirror for the new ruler becomes visible: the new ruler was evidently

expected to behave rationally in such decisions in the future. Finally, Musta‘idd Hān also managed to leave his personal opinion in the text by describing the artwork as beautiful.

Just as important were the author’s indirect relativisations. If Musta‘idd Hān did not directly relativise a dramatic event, he still did so in an indirect way by grouping several relativising anecdotes around the event in question. These anecdotes successfully distracted the reader from contingent events such as temple destruction and the execution of insurgents and Hindus by, for example, emotionally humanising the protagonist. By anthropomorphising Aurangzīb, he appears as one character among many. Here, Musta‘idd Hān emphasises his frailty and loneliness, which in turn increase compassion for Aurangzīb, even though he was often actually responsible for the conflict. Additionally, the permanent state of emergency, the representation of Aurangzīb as a caring father who took care of all his subordinates, and the portrayal of his discipline and austere lifestyle all contributed to helping the reader completely forget the actual conflicts.

In the fifth and final chapter, we focused on the analysis of Musta‘idd Hān’s techniques of compilation. Here, I questioned one of the severest criticisms against our author, one which has been articulated in particular by Sajida Alvi in her standard study on the three main sources of Aurangzīb’s reign and which has been generally accepted by later research. Alvi condemned Musta‘idd Hān as a plagiarist who failed to mention his sources. Here I disagree. He directly refers right to his primary source for the first ten years of his text at the beginning of the eleventh chapter and explicitly highlights that this section was based on Muḥammad Kāẓim’s *‘Ālamgīr-nāma*. Later in the text, he also suggested that the reader should think about turning to that source, since there was much more detail to be found in it. Furthermore, in regard to the second part of the text, there was no need to name each reference to the *Mir’āt al-‘ālam*, as he had worked as Muhammad Baḥtāvar Hān’s assistant on that text until the latter’s death in 1685. Given that he was directly commissioned by Aurangzīb to finalise this text and publish it, he had every right to consider himself as the document’s co-author. Finally, I chose two case studies of events which occur in the *Ma’āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, the *Ālamgīr-nāma*, and the *Mir’āt al-‘ālam* in order to show that our author created his own versions of the occurrences. Here, we discussed the classic conflict between the brothers Dārā and Aurangzīb and one of Aurangzīb’s most controversial decisions, namely his allegedly universal ban of music. Both case studies showed that Musta‘idd Hān did not just copy from his two prominent templates. Nor was it the case that he had no individual opinion on these controversial issues; indeed, the opposite is true.

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Hardly any other modern researcher summarises the current view on Aurangzīb better than Catherine Brown: ‘The very name of Aurangzib seems to act in the popular imagination as a signifier of politico-religious bigotry and repression, regardless of historical accuracy.’<sup>944</sup> When I was in the final stages of my work, I realised, sadly enough, that nothing has really changed since Brown’s statement. On the contrary: since 9/11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the civil wars in the Middle East, the refugee crises, ISIS, the assassinations at *Charlie Hebdo*, and, finally, the bombings in Paris in November 2015, the perception of Islam is at its nadir. All of this, inevitably, affects the interpretation of Islam’s history and that of its political and historical leaders. In India, too, due to the Mumbai bombings in 2008 and 2011 and to numerous other important historical factors, the perception of Islam appears to have heavily deteriorated, as we see exactly the same stereotypes as in the West.

The first time I was in India, I was still in primary school: I remember well the storming of the Babri mosque on 6 December 1992 while celebrating St Nicholas’ Day. As far as I can remember, nearly all of my parent’s friends were Hindus and Muslims. Now, upon finishing my work, I realise that many of the subsequent discussions and memories are still present. Unfortunately, we can still talk about identical issues. Only a few months ago, in September 2015, a political debate was held in Delhi over whether to rename the formerly prestigious Aurangzīb Road in order to prevent ‘immortalising Aurangzīb’s cruelty’.<sup>945</sup>

In this sense, my work is a modest contribution to the historiography surrounding Muslim Mughal India in the early eighteenth century. My goal was to challenge some persistent interpretations of this important source and its author. For too long, the *Ma’āşir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, as well as many other documents of this culture and time, has been approached without using any sophisticated methodological tools; often, such sources are simply quoted without any investigation for a possible deeper significance, let alone for the presence of an authorial strategy or a normative meaning. In our case, this meant that the *Ma’āşir-i ‘Ālamgīrī* was quoted just to demonstrate Aurangzīb’s life-long aggression against all Hindus and to prove Musta‘idd Hān’s advocacy and uncritical adulation of such a policy as a high representative of the Muslim intelligentsia of the post-Aurangzīb era. However, this was not the case: our

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<sup>944</sup> Brown, *Did Aurangzīb Ban Music*, 47.

<sup>945</sup> Naveed Ibal, *Renaming Aurangzīb Road- Kalam dragged into controversy he tried to avoid all his life: Congress*, in *The Indian Express*, September 8, 2015 (<http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/renaming-Aurangzīb-road-kalam-dragged-into-controversy-he-tried-to-avoid-all-his-life-congress/#sthash.uRYa0Qfy.dpuf>), last accessed 22/12/2015. The street has now been renamed Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Road.

author certainly did not describe ‘Aurangzīb’s cruelty’ as the best possible path for an ideal Muslim ruler to take. In fact, Musta‘idd Ḥān actually tried to propose alternatives for the future, despite all the obstacles he had to face as an official chronicler. His text, the *Ma‘āṣir-i ‘Ālamgīrī*, should therefore be seen as a future-looking agenda 1710.

Cologne, December 2015



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